CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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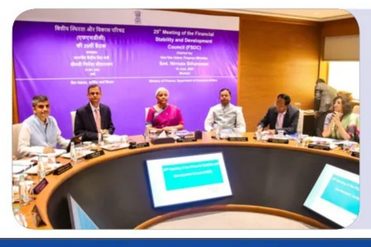

Centre's Borrowing Manageable: RBI Governor P9

P12 Faster Courts Favor Dhakshineswar in Davis Cup

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Parliament work stalled by protests

Budget session began tensely as Oppn sloganeered, prompting Speaker to suspend proceedings

NEW DELHI

The Budget Session of Parliament faced major disruptions on Friday, forcing both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to adjourn until Monday. The Lok Sabha proceedings were halted within minutes after Opposition members began loud protests and sloganeering against the government. Speaker Om Birla expressed frustration, noting that 19 hours of House time have already been wasted during the session.

Opposition MPs, including Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, staged protests at the Makar Dwar, calling the India-US trade agreement a "trap deal." Rahul Gandhi criticized Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying, "Do whatever you think is right," while other members raised placards highlighting their concerns over trade policies.

Union Ministers, including Shantanu Thakur, Ashwini Vaishnaw, and Shivraj Singh Chouhan, urged Opposition MPs to let the House function smoothly. BJP MPs Jagadish Shettar and Ravneet Singh Bittu accused Opposition members of undermining parliamentary procedures and called for uninterrupted discussions.

> Parliament's Budget Session was disrupted Friday as protests over the India-US trade agreement forced repeated adjournments of both Houses till Monday. Opposition sloganeering stalled debates on the Union Budget and welfare Bills, while ministers urged order, warning that valuable House time continues to be lost amid mounting political tensions nationwide.

In the Rajya Sabha, ministers responded to questions on issues such as train stoppages at Tirur and digital agriculture projects, but the Upper House also adjourned and is set to resume on Monday.

The day's agenda included the Union Budget discussion for 2026–27, several welfare Bills for farmers, students, and workers, and legislation on education, healthcare, and social security. Despite planned debates, the session was overshadowed by political friction.

Observers noted the tense atmosphere in Parliament, with repeated interruptions affecting the smooth conduct of business. Both Houses are expected to resume critical discussions next week, with officials emphasizing the importance of maintaining decorum.

CM urges farmers embrace post-harvest entrepreneurship

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah called upon farmers across Karnataka to unite and strongly oppose what he termed the Central Government's conspiracy to abolish the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and implement the VB-G RAM GAct.

Addressing the International Trade Fair–2026, themed Post-Harvest Agriculture – Farmer Empowerment, and the State-Level Agricultural Scholars Award ceremony, the Chief Minister said agriculture can become profitable only if farmers move beyond cultivation and actively engage in post-harvest activities.

POST-HARVEST FOCUS

"Farmers must become entrepreneurs. Along with crop cultivation, they should take part in storage, processing, packaging, marketing and by-product development," Siddaramaiah said, adding that greater participation of women in agriculture was essential. He described the achievements of women farmers honoured at the event as inspiring examples of how agriculture could be transformed into a viable livelihood.

SUPPORT MEASURES HIGHLIGHTED

The Chief Minister listed several initiatives undertaken by the State government to support farmers, including the supply of quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, and a subsidy of ₹1,500 crore for the purchase of agricultural machinery. He said Karnataka ranked first in the country in implementing the crop insurance scheme, with ₹6,000 crore already disbursed as compensation to farmers.

PROCUREMENT AND DIVERSIFICATION

Siddaramaiah urged farmers to diversify beyond sugarcane and ragi. He said sugarcane prices were fixed after discussions with farmers, while tur dal procurement centres were opened a month early. With maize production expected to reach 54 lakh metric tonnes, he said arrangements were made to procure 40 lakh metric tonnes at ₹2,400 per quintal after consultations with ethanol manufacturers and industries.

MGNREGA VS VB-G RAM G ACT

Criticising the Centre, the Chief Minister said MGNREGA, introduced under former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, provided employment to women, Adivasis and labourers through Gram Sabha-led projects. "Without the consent of State governments, MGNREGA has been scrapped and replaced by the VB-G RAM G scheme, even removing Mahatma Gandhi's name," he said, urging farmers to demand the restoration of MGNREGA.

YOUTH AND AGRICULTURE

Calling for greater youth participation, the Chief Minister noted that dependence on agriculture had fallen from about 80% before Independence to 62% today. "Agriculture becomes profitable only when post-harvest activities are adopted," he said.

KRUSHI BHAGYA RESTORED

CM said the Krushi Bhagya scheme, suspended during the previous BJP government, had been restored with an allocation of nearly ₹200 crore. He also highlighted welfare schemes such as Shakti, Gruha Jyothi, Gruha Lakshmi and Anna Bhagya.

ICC Under-19 World Cup: Sooryavanshi's Masterclass Guides India to Sixth Title

HARARE

Vaibhav Sooryavanshi's breathtaking 80-ball 175 powered India to a record sixth ICC Under-19 World Cup title, as the colts thrashed England by 100 runs in the final at Harare on Friday. Electing to bat first, India posted a mammoth 411 for nine, with Sooryavanshi smashing 15 sixes, reaching his century in just 55 balls—the second fastest in U-19 World Cup history. His innings set multiple records: the highest individual score in a U-19 final, the tournament's highest team total in a summit clash, and the most sixes in a Youth ODI innings, surpassing his own previous mark. England's reply faltered from the start, and they were bowled out for 311, never seriously challenging India's dominance. Sooryavanshi, only 14, also became the youngest centurion in U-19 World Cup history, while accumulating 22 sixes in this edition alone, surpassing South Africa's Dewald Brevis record of 18 sixes set in 2022. India's victory underscores the depth of talent in their youth system, with Sooryavanshi's aggressive, record-breaking innings now celebrated as one of the most memorable knocks in the history of U-19 cricket.

Deputy Chief Minister plays down leadership speculation, defers all decisions to Congress high command

'He is our high command': D K Shivakumar reacts to Yathindra's CM remark

MANGALURU/MYSURU

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Friday brushed aside speculation over Karnataka's leadership after MLC Yathindra said the Congress high command had given the green signal for his father Siddaramaiah to continue as Chief Minister for five years.

Reacting to the remark, Shivakumar said with a touch of sarcasm, "He (Yathindra) is our high command. Whatever he says, I accept it with respect. Let us accept him as high command when he issues statements like a high command." He, however, made it clear that any decision on leadership would rest solely with the Congress high command in Delhi.

When asked about MLA Basavaraju's demand for clarity on the alleged power-sharing arrangement, Shivakumar declined to comment. "I will not respond to statements made by Basavaraju or Yathindra. If any response is to be given, it should come from the high command," he said.

Speaking to reporters at Mangaluru International Airport, Shivakumar said preparations were underway to strengthen the party organisation across the state. "I have directed that foundation stones be laid for 100 Congress offices in March. Whether or not the AICC gives dates, we will make all arrangements and begin the work," he said.

He added that he was in Puttur to attend the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Congress Bhavana and noted that March 10 would mark six years since he took charge as KPCC president.

Responding to allegations that Muslims were not invited to the Puttur event, Shivakumar rejected the charge, saying the Congress does not practise caste- or religion-based politics. "Our party believes in ideology, not divisions. Dharma should be in politics, but politics should not be in dharma," he said, dismissing the allegations as politically motivated.

AAP LEADER LUCKY OBEROI SHOT DEAD IN BROAD DAYLIGHT

JALANDHAR

In a shocking act of violence, Aam Aadmi Party leader Lucky Oberoi was shot dead in broad daylight outside a gurdwara in Model Town, Jalandhar, on Friday morning. Oberoi, 38, was about to leave the gurdwara in his Mahindra Thar Roxx after offering prayers when unidentified assailants on a two-wheeler opened fire, hitting him with 8-10 bullets. He was immediately rushed to a local hospital but succumbed to his injuries, confirmed ACP Parminder Singh. The police have launched a detailed investigation into the incident. Oberoi, a prominent Jalandhar-based AAP leader, was well-known in the city's political circles.

The killing sparked outrage among political leaders. Leader of Opposition Partap Singh Bajwa condemned the act, saying the murder exposes Punjab's rising gang violence and administrative failure. "If even ruling party leaders aren't safe, what hope remains for ordinary citizens?" he tweeted.

BJP national general secretary Tarun Chugh called the incident a grim reminder of Punjab's slipping law and order. He criticized the AAP government for failing to protect lives, warning that rising gangster activities and administrative paralysis are threatening public safety. Political leaders and citizens have demanded swift action against the perpetrators. The incident has raised serious questions over the state government's ability to maintain law and order in Punjab, once known for its courage and safety.

4 B'luru Tourists Found Dead at Nalanda Dharamshala

PATNA

Four tourists from Bengaluru, including two women, were found dead inside a room at Digambar Jain Dharamshala in Rajgir, Nalanda district. The room was reportedly locked from the inside, and the cause of death is yet to be determined.

According to the dharamshala register, the group had booked the room on January 31 after visiting Nepal, with plans to travel to Pawapuri next. Police and administrative officials reached the site after staff alerted them, and a forensic team from Patna has been called for investigation. Rajgir locals had last seen the tourists in the market two days ago. Rajgir is a significant Jain pilgrimage centre, known for its connection to Lord Mahavira and over 26 ancient temples.

QUICK READ

Meghalaya coal mine blast death toll rises to 25

SHILLONG

The death toll in Thursday's illegal coal mine explosion in Thangsku area, Umsngat village, East Jaintia Hills, rose to 25 after seven more bodies were recovered, police said. Authorities launched large-scale search and rescue operations immediately following the blast. So far, 12 of the 25 victims have been identified, while recovery efforts continue amid challenging conditions. Director General of Police I Nongrang confirmed the figures and urged caution in illegal mining areas.

Rahul Gandhi calls Delhi biker's death 'murder'

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has described the death of 25-year-old motorcyclist Kamal Bhayani in Janakpuri, west Delhi, as "murder," blaming negligence by authorities. Kamal, a Kailashpuri resident and private bank call centre employee, fell into a pit dug by the Delhi Jal Board, leading to his death. Gandhi condemned what he called an "epidemic of greed and negligence" stating that the tragedy shattered the life of Kamal and his family. Authorities are investigating the incident.

Bihar Police kill notorious criminal in encounter

VAISHALI

Police in Vaishali district killed a wanted criminal, Abhijit Kumar (31) alias Prince Kumar, in an encounter on Friday. Kumar was wanted in over 30 cases, including dacoity, arms violations, loot, and jewellery thefts. During the operation, police also arrested one of his associates. Authorities said the encounter was part of a crackdown on organized crime in the district. Officials highlighted that such operations aim to ensure public safety and deter criminal activities.

DEADLY FRIDAY ATTACK

Mosque bombing kills dozens in Pakistan capital

ISLAMABAD

A powerful bomb exploded inside a Shia mosque on the outskirts of Islamabad during Friday prayers, killing at least 31 people and injuring more than 160 others, according to police. Many of the injured were reported to be in critical condition and were rushed to nearby hospitals by rescue workers, police teams, and local residents. Authorities said the blast was a deliberate attack and confirmed that an investigation has begun to identify those responsible.

No group has claimed responsibility so far. In the past, militant groups such as the Pakistani Taliban, Baloch separatist outfits, and the Islamic State affiliate have carried out similar attacks in different parts of Pakistan. Although Islamabad usually remains safer than other cities, the country has seen a sharp rise in militant violence in recent months.

President Asif Ali Zardari strongly condemned the bombing, calling it a crime against humanity. He expressed deep sorrow over the loss of innocent lives and said the nation stands with the affected families. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also denounced the attack and ordered a full investigation. He directed authorities to provide the best possible medical care to all injured victims.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi asked officials to ensure security and support emergency services. The attack took place while Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev was visiting Islamabad, though his official event was held far from the blast site.

Security around the capital has been tightened following the incident. The bombing comes days after deadly attacks in Balochistan province and highlights continuing security challenges faced by Pakistan. Officials urged citizens to remain calm, cooperate with police, and report any suspicious activity immediately nationwide.

"Participate in Sri Hanuman Chalisa Parayana Mahayajna on Feb 14"

MYSURU

The poster for the Sri Hanuman Chalisa Parayana Mahayajna, to be held under the aegis of Avadhoota Datta Peetham and under the leadership of Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji, was released on Ooty Road at the premises of Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Ashram by Sri Dattavijayananda Swamiji and MLA T.S. Srivatsa.

The Mahayajna is scheduled to take place on February 14 at the Maharaja's College Grounds in Mysuru.

Speaking on the occasion, Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji said that the recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa enhances human longevity and health, and that the entire world is being protected by the divine power of Lord Anjaneya. "The power of Hanuman, who united Lord Rama and Goddess Sita, is immense. On February 14, a Sri Hanuman Chalisa Parayana Mahayajna will be held at Maharaja's College Grounds in Mysuru with the participation of lakhs of devotees. Anna Prasada and Hanuma Raksha (protective sacred offering) would be distributed to everyone.

Special Place

Sri Dattavijayananda Bala Swamiji said that devotees across the world have established Anjaneya idols, temples, ashrams, and devotional centres under the inspiration of Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji. Despite this global presence, the senior pontiff has immense affection and devotion towards Mysuru. As per his mother's wish, he established the Karya Siddhi Anjaneya Shakti Kendra in Mysuru and has been continuously organising religious activities with the participation of devotees, without any caste discrimination. The Hanuman Chalisa Parayana has entered the Guinness Book of World Records. Devotees may recite the Hanuman Chalisa in their homes and then collectively participate in the mass recitation on February 14 to receive divine blessings.

Srivatsa said that Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji has widely propagated the strength of Hindu Dharma at the international level by organising Hanuman Chalisa recitations and installing majestic Karya Siddhi Anjaneya idols even abroad.

He recalled Swamiji's humanitarian service during the COVID-19 crisis, when 10,000 food packets and health-protection materials were distributed daily to Mysuru residents. Besides, as many as 16 temples have been renovated in the civic workers' colony, where religious practices and rituals were taught to civic workers, thereby conveying a powerful message of social equality.

Congress leaders N.M. Naveen Kumar, K.R. Satyanarayana, Nazarbad Nataraj, Jeevadara Girish, Vikas Shastri, Ajay Shastri, Vikram Iyengar, Rakesh Bhatt, Dr. Lakshmi, Jagadeesh, Prakash Priyadarshi, Ranganath, Jayasimha, Jatti Prasad, S.N. Rajesh, Mahesh Kamath, and several others were present.

Power must not be transferred to anti-Constitutional forces: Yatindra

MYSURU

Legislative Council member Dr. Yathindra Siddaramaiah said that power should not be entrusted to anti-constitutional forces.

Speaking after inaugurating the programme on Friday at the Rani Bahadur Auditorium, Manasa Gangotri, he said, It is crucial whom they hand over power to. If power is given to those who ensure equality and social justice even for the last person in society, the Constitution will survive. However, anti-constitutional forces are becoming stronger in recent times and are gaining more power which is a dangerous trend. At any cost such a situation must be prevented.

A rare politician

The Congress MLC described Social Welfare Minister Dr. H.C. Mahadevappa as a rare politician and an exceptional leader, saying that he works with faith in the constitutional values of liberty, equality, and fraternity as envisioned by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The minister is a close associate of his father, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and has stood by him consistently. "When my father was expelled from the JD(S), Mahadevappa stood firmly with him. He later joined AIPJD and then the Congress. He has been elected six times as an MLA from T. Narasipura and has served as a minister, working closely with my father. Mahadevappa also has a share in the success of Siddaramaiah, who is now serving as Chief Minister for the second time," he said.

Another MLC Dr. D. Thimmayya, writer Prof. Rajappa Dalavayi, and senior University of Mysore professor Dr. D. Anand were the chief guests.

Present on the dais were Honorary President M.N. Swamy (Bannur); State President Nanjunda (Hinkal); Vice President K.V. Bharatraj (Kadakola); Secretary R. Mahesh (Haradanahalli); Treasurer B.M. Mahadev; Media Advisor Kote H.K. Manjunath; and Directors Mavinahalli Nagesh, Hullahalli Babu, and Benakanahalli M. Harish Kumar.

Executive President Dr. K.N. Basavaraju (Kurubur) welcomed the gathering, and General Secretary Dr. B.R. Nagaraju (Benakanahalli) administered the Preamble of the Constitution.

VETERAN JOURNALIST PASSES AWAY

MYSURU

K.V.Srinivasan, a veteran journalist passed away at his residence in Kalkuni village in Hunsur taluk of Mysuru district on Friday.

He was 81 years and suffering from a brief illness. Born on March 6, 1944, Srinivasan completed M.A. in journalism from University of Mysore in 1975-76 and completed LLB from Sarada Vilas Law College in 1972-75. A true gandhian, Srinivasan started a lab journal of PG in Journalism in 1975-77, and founded a weekly paper, Navadhwani in 1976. He worked in several newspapers in various capacities. He worked as part time reporter for Akashavani from 1986 to 2007.

Last rites will be performed on Saturday.

South Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament for Men 2025–26: Final

MYSURU

The South Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament for Men 2025–26 reached its climax on Day Ten, Thursday, February 5, at the JSS Science and Technology University campus in Mysuru, as the much-anticipated final was played. With the championship title at stake, the contest was marked by intense competition, high-pressure moments and standout performances from both sides. The final reflected the quality and depth of university cricket in the South Zone, bringing the tournament to a thrilling conclusion. The result of the final match played today is as follows:

Ground No. 01

VTU Belagavi faced Osmania University in a high-intensity final-stage encounter. The toss was conducted by Santosh Kumar, Vice Chancellor of JSS Science and Technology University, with VTU Belagavi winning the toss and opting to field. Batting first, Osmania University posted an imposing 214 for 5 in their 25 overs, led by a commanding 65 off 41 balls from Kunal Daswani. In reply, VTU Belagavi fought hard in the chase but were bowled out for 204 in 24.3 overs, with Samarth Hegde top-scoring with 46 off 34 balls. Osmania University held their nerve to secure the victory, with Vamshi Kumar named Player of the Match for his impactful bowling performance.

Brief Score

Osmania University: 214/5 in 25 overs

(Kunal Daswani 65 off 41 balls, Vaibhav Sajaana 45 off 27; Pranesh Kumar 2-0-12-0)

VTU Belagavi: 204 all out in 24.3 overs

(Samarth Hegde 46 off 34 balls, Vishnu G Goudar 39 off 32; V Yashveer 5-0-29-1)

Player of the Match: Vamshi Kumar (5 overs, 48 runs, 3 wickets)

Ground No. 02

(Overs reduced to 20 due to delay)

Anna University faced REVA University in the Third Place Match of the South Zone Inter-University Cricket Tournament for Men 2025–26. The toss was conducted by M. R. Suresh, CEO of Cycle Pure Agarbatti, NR Group, Mysuru, with Anna University winning the toss and opting to bat. Batting first, Anna University posted 135 for 6 in their 20 overs, anchored by a resolute 66 off 67 balls from P. Saravanan. In reply, REVA University chased down the target in a tense finish, reaching 137 for 4 in 19.4 overs.REVA University clinched the third place with a well-earned victory, with Rohith Koya named Player of the Match for his decisive bowling performance.

Brief Score:

Anna University: 135/6 in 20 overs

(P. Saravanan 66 off 67 balls)

REVA University: 137/4 in 19.4 overs

(Gyan Somaiah 44 off 24 balls) Player of the Match: Rohith Koya (4 overs, 20 runs, 3 wickets).

"Need to understand what students expect from lecturers"

MYSURU

Prof.M.S.Sapna, director, Educational Multimedia Research Centre, Manasagangotri, Mysuru opined that lots of innovations are going on to understand what students expect from lecturers due to several distractions.

Speaking after inaugurating a two-day seminar on 'Essential Skills for Effective Teaching" as part of RUSA 2.0 funded faculty development programme here on Friday, she said teaching has undergone a sea change in the last few decades. Unlike old times, lecturers have to come prepared to the classes not knowing what the students ask them.

Communication is very important for teachers. Sometimes they may think a lot as there will be newer challenges and they cannot repeat same thing daily especially in certain subjets.

Need of the hour is to find out what kind of innovation can be adopted to protect interest among the students. They would come across some tips during the workshops of this kind which would help teaching.

She said a good teacher is one who is a good listener especially to the problems of students. They have a different kind of audience as they belonged to the different economic background, culture and other social issues. The question before teachers was to see their target audience. Understanding the psychology of students is equally important.

Prof H.P.Jyothi, director, Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre, Manasagangotri, Dr L.Nanjundaswamy and others were present.

'Have self-confidence to face exams boldly"

MYSURU

If students have self-confidence, facing examinations becomes easy, said Nagaraj V. Bairi, District President of the Karnataka Sugama Sangeetha Parishat.

Speaking while presiding over the inauguration of the Mysuru branch of the Davanagere Kalakuncha Cultural Institution and a free pre-examination preparatory workshop for SSLC students, he said students should make full use of such workshops to build self-confidence and write their examinations without any fear or anxiety.

Inaugurating the workshop, District Kannada Sahitya Parishat President Maddikere Gopal said concentration is crucial for students. If one studies with focus and concentration, any examination can be written well.

Referring to Google CEO Sundar Pichai, he urged students to work hard, study in a planned manner, and progress in life just as successful individuals have done. Mysuru Taluk BEO M. Prakash and senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar, who were the chief guests, also addressed the students.

"Dream Big, Stay Focused, and Build the Future": MLA K. Harishgowda

MYSURU

K.Harish Gowda, Chamaraja Constituency MLA called upon the students to decide what they wanted to achieve once they completed the courses.

Speaking after inaugurating State Level Man.co,-fest 'Aavishkaar-2026' one mind many many innovations organized by JSS College for Women here on Friday, he urged young minds to prepare themselves for a rapidly changing world filled with both challenges and immense opportunities. Today's students stand at a critical crossroads where knowledge, skills, and character together decide success. The commerce students face intense competition, fast-changing economic trends, technological disruption, and job market uncertainty. "Marks alone are no longer enough," he said, adding that students must develop analytical thinking, adaptability, and ethical values. The pressure to choose the right career path, parental expectations, and fear of failure often create confusion, but he reminded students that challenges are not roadblocks—they are stepping stones. Highlighting the opportunities before them, he said the commerce field today offers vast options—entrepreneurship, finance, accounting, data analytics, banking, taxation, startups, and global trade.

Health System Under Strain: Doctors Sound Alarm, Threaten Protest

MYSURU

The Karnataka State Government Medical Officers Association (KSGMOA) has raised strong objections over what it described as the deteriorating delivery of public health services across the state, warning of an agitation if the government fails to respond to long-pending demands.

In a statement, the association said it has repeatedly written to the state government and held several rounds of discussions highlighting serious issues affecting both doctors and patients. However, no concrete action has been taken so far. The association warned that continued inaction by the Chief Minister and the Health Department would leave doctors with no option but to take the path of protest.

Echoing these concerns, the Mysuru District Medical Officers Association appealed to the government to immediately address urgent and critical problems impacting government hospitals. These include the continuous and irregular shortage of essential medicines, acute staff shortages, and the burden of 24/7 duty responsibilities being imposed on existing staff despite inadequate manpower.

Doctors also flagged concerns over unilateral administrative decisions, frequent and irrational transfers throughout the year, and the failure to upgrade several health institutions to the Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS) model. The association further criticised restrictions on private practice after duty hours, delays in salaries and tenure approvals for contract doctors, and non-payment of wages to NHM-contracted staff.

Hospital functioning has also suffered due to the non-release of grants, affecting hospital management and laboratory services. In addition, doctors pointed to limitations imposed on MD and MS courses for in-service doctors, and the failure to upgrade taluk and district hospitals to DNB teaching status.

NAJMA BANU SECURED FIRST RANK IN B.COM EXAMS

MYSURU

Najma Banu, w/o Mr.Abdul Kareem, a resident of Rajiv Nagar, Mysuru, got First Rank with Highest Marks in B.Com. Examination held during the year 2020. She had finished her Degree in Karnataka State Open University, Mysuru. She received Endowment Gold Medal and Certificate from Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot during the university convocation held recently.

High Command Signal Clear: CM Siddaramaiah's Chair Safe for Five Years

MYSURU

Putting to rest persistent speculation over a leadership change in Karnataka, Legislative Council member Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah on Friday asserted that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will complete a full five-year term, claiming that the Congress high command has clearly indicated there will be no change in leadership.

Speaking to reporters after attending a private programme in Mysuru, he said there was absolutely no confusion within the party regarding the Chief Minister's position. No one is asking for Siddaramaiah to step down. The high command may not have said it openly, but the signal is loud and clear—there will be no leadership change. " I firmly believe Siddaramaiah will remain Chief Minister for five years," he said.

Refuting rumours circulating in political circles, the MLC maintained that the issue of a CM change was already settled. There is no discussion in political circles about changing the Chief Minister. Only the media is debating this topic. No one has demanded that the CM be removed, and the high command has not accepted any such requests from anyone.

Relief and Happiness After MUDA Case Verdict

Commenting on the court's acceptance of the B-report in the MUDA case, Dr Yathindra said his family had complete faith in the judiciary. They never committed any wrongdoing and welcome the court's verdict. His mother is very happy with the judgment. The complainant, Snehamayi Krishna, is free to continue his legal battle. The law is equal for everyone.

Responding to allegations that he was interfering in government departments, particularly accusations linked to Energy Minister George, the CM's Son dismissed the claims as politically motivated. "I am not interfering in any department. Minister George himself has clarified this. The BJP is dragging my name unnecessarily. Even in the Assembly, they mentioned my name without any basis. They have been targeting me for a long time," he alleged.

On the ongoing war of words between the BJP and Congress over MGNREGA, the Congress leader launched a sharp ideological attack. They are guided by Mahatma Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj. The BJP neither wants people's welfare nor Gandhi's ideals. They have merely changed the name, nothing else.

Backing Ballot Paper Elections

The Congress MLC also voiced support for ballot paper-based elections, saying even technologically advanced nations have moved away from EVMs. He welcome elections through ballot papers. Many major countries have scrapped EVMs. In the future, it would be appropriate to conduct elections in the state using ballot papers.

DC's orders: Encroachment removed near JSS College Road

MYSURU

Mysuru Tahsildar Mahesh, along with a team of officials, removed the encroachment of a piece of land and took possession of the land on behalf of the government.

In Survey No. 87 of Mysuru village, Kasaba Hobli, Mysuru Taluk, an extent of 0.38 acre/gunta of land had been reserved and ordered, as per the official memorandum of the Deputy Commissioner in favour of the Department of Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare, Mysuru, for the purpose of constructing a post-matric boys'/girls' students' hostel building.

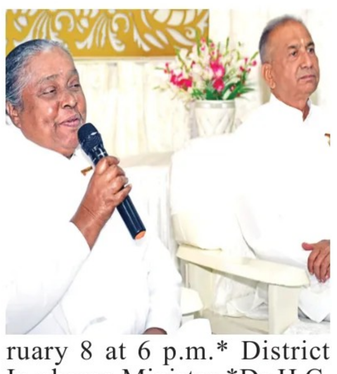
As unauthorized scooter parking was being carried out on the said land, the District Officer of the Department of Backward Classes and Minorities Welfare had submitted a request to the district administration seeking removal of the encroachment.

Acting on this request and in accordance with the directions of higher authorities, the Tahsildhar carried out anti-encroachment drive and removed the make-shift scooter parking. During the encroachment removal operation, Chikkanna, Assistant Director of the City Survey Department; Raghavendra, District Officer of the Department of Backward Classes Welfare; Police Inspector Yoganjanappa; Ravishankar; and Rohith were present.

Shivaratri Festival and 'Jnana–Vijnana Divya Darshana'

MYSURU

A grand Shivaratri Mahotsava and *'Jnana–Vijnana Divya Darshana' Fair* will be organised in Mysuru from *February 8 to 22* to mark the *90th anniversary of the international spiritual organisation Prajapita Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya* and this year's *Mahashivaratri*, Rajyogini Brahma Kumari Lakshmi said on Friday.



Addressing a press conference at *Yadavagiri Jnana Prakash Bhavan, she said the fair will be held at the site opposite **Aishwarya Petrol Bunk on Hunsur Road, in front of **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. One of the main attractions will be a **replica of the famed Somnath Temple of Gujarat*, along with several spiritual, educational and experiential exhibits aimed at holistic well-being.

Principal *Rajyogi Brahma Kumari Ranganath Ji* said the fair will feature a wide range of activities, including awareness programmes against drug abuse, a five-minute computer-based mental relaxation experience titled *'Mind Spa'*, visual presentations on harmonious family life, guidance sessions for students on concentration and goal-setting, value-based games, meditation camps, daily reflections, lectures and cultural programmes. Special awareness campaigns against substance abuse will also be conducted through mobile outreach vehicles.

Inauguration and highlights The inaugural programme will be held on *February 8 at 6 p.m.* District In-charge Minister *Dr H.C. Mahadevappa, **Dr Nishchalanandanatha Mahaswamiji, MLAs **Harish Gowda* and *D Ravishankar, Vice-Chancellor **Prof Sharanappa Halase, former Advocate General **Ashok Harnahalli, and Minister **Dr C.K. Subbaraya* will attend as chief guests. On the occasion, the *Ishwariya Lifetime Achievement Award* will be conferred on noted writer *C.K. Shivappa* and renowned Bharatanatyam exponent *Dr Vasundhara Doraswamy*.

Key events include the *60th anniversary* of the Mysuru Sub-Zone on *February 11, an **All-Religion Conference for World Peace* on *February 13, and the **Mahashivaratri celebrations and valedictory function* on *February 15*. Daily reflection and meditation sessions will be held from *6.15 p.m. to 6.45 p.m.*, followed by lectures by eminent speakers and cultural programmes each evening featuring classical and folk dances, devotional music and dance dramas. Rajyogini Brahma Kumari Lakshmi Ji appealed to citizens to participate with their families and make the spiritual celebration a grand success.

Vedike Distributes Notebooks to 500 Govt School kids, Ration Kits to Old-Age Homes

MYSURU

To commemorate the sacred occasion on which Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Swamiji of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetha bestowed the monastic name Sri Vidyananda Swamiji upon Sri Bala Manjunatha Swamiji, the Kannadambe Rakshana Vedike organised a series of social service activities.

At a simple programme held in front of the Kannadambe Rakshana Vedike office in Hootagalli, under the leadership of its president B.B. Rajashekhar, notebooks were distributed to more than 500 students from various government schools. In addition, food and grocery kits were distributed to two old-age homes, along with the organisation of free health check-up camps, free eye examination camps, and annasantarpane.

The programme was inaugurated by noted writer Jayappa Honnalli, who said that it was heartening to see such a disciplined and socially committed initiative being organised to mark the auspicious naming ceremony conducted by Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Swamiji.

"Through Kannadambe Rakshana Vedike, we have commemorated the sacred occasion of Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Swamiji conferring the name Sri Vidyananda Swamiji on Sri Bala Manjunatha Swamiji by distributing notebooks to 500 government school children, ration kits to orphanages and old-age homes, conducting health and eye check-ups, and organising a community meal. I thank everyone who cooperated in this social service initiative."

—B.B. Rajashekhar,
President, Kannadambe Rakshana Vedike

He said, "Distributing notebooks to over 500 underprivileged government school children, conducting health and eye check-ups, supplying grocery kits to old-age homes, and arranging a community meal—all in remembrance of this sacred occasion—is truly meaningful. Under the leadership of Kannadambe Rakshana Vedike president B.B. Rajashekhar, this is a socially responsible and collective welfare-oriented initiative. The Vedike has set an example for Kannada organisations."

He further added that the programme conveyed a strong message to society.

"We live in a time when awareness itself is regarded as the Supreme. Saints are those who consider the entire society as their own and guide people from darkness to light. The Sringeri Sharada Peetha is a 1,200-year-old ancient monastery, one of the four peethas established by Adi Shankaracharya. He resided here for 12 years and propagated Advaita Vedanta. In the backdrop of such a rich spiritual heritage, this social initiative is most welcome," he said.

1st-Phase Selection Process for Boys & Girls for Sports Schools/Hostels

MYSURU

The Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Government of Karnataka, has announced the first-phase selection trials for admission to Sports Schools/Hostels being run across the State.

The selection process will be conducted for:

Junior category: Boys and girls below 14 years of age (born on or after 01-06-2012) who will be eligible for admission to 8th standard for the academic year 2026–27.

Senior category: Boys and girls below 18 years of age (born on or after 01-06-2008) who will be eligible for admission to First PUC for the academic year 2026–27.

The trials will be held on February 15 and 16, starting from 9.00 a.m., at the Chamundi Vihar Sports Complex, Mysuru.

Selections will be conducted in the following sports disciplines:

Athletics, Basketball, Cycling, Football, Gymnastics, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Hockey, Judo, Volleyball, Wrestling, Archery, and Fencing.

The first-phase selection process will be conducted on February 10 at 10.00 a.m. at the Chamundi Vihar Sports Complex by Athletics Coach Ramaswamy K.N. (Mob: 9449300330) and Gym Instructor Vishw M. (Mob: 9481075364).

Candidates appearing for the selection must submit the application form issued to talented sportspersons who were selected at the taluk-level trials, duly filled, along with a recent passport-size photograph, medical fitness certificate, and a copy of the Aadhaar card.

For further details, candidates may contact the Assistant Director, Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports, Mysuru, Telephone: 0821-2564179, according to a press release issued by Bhaskar Nayak, KAS, Assistant Director of the department.

NO POWER SUPPLY TODAY

MYSURU

Due to underground cable installation works in the V.V. Mohalla Sub-Division, power supply will be interrupted in the following areas on February 7 from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

Areas affected on February 6: Regions under the Hebbal 11 kV feeder, including Hebbal Main Road, First Stage, Basavanagudi Circle, Subramanyanagar, Lokanayakanagar, Lingayyanakere, Hebbal Quarters, and surrounding areas.

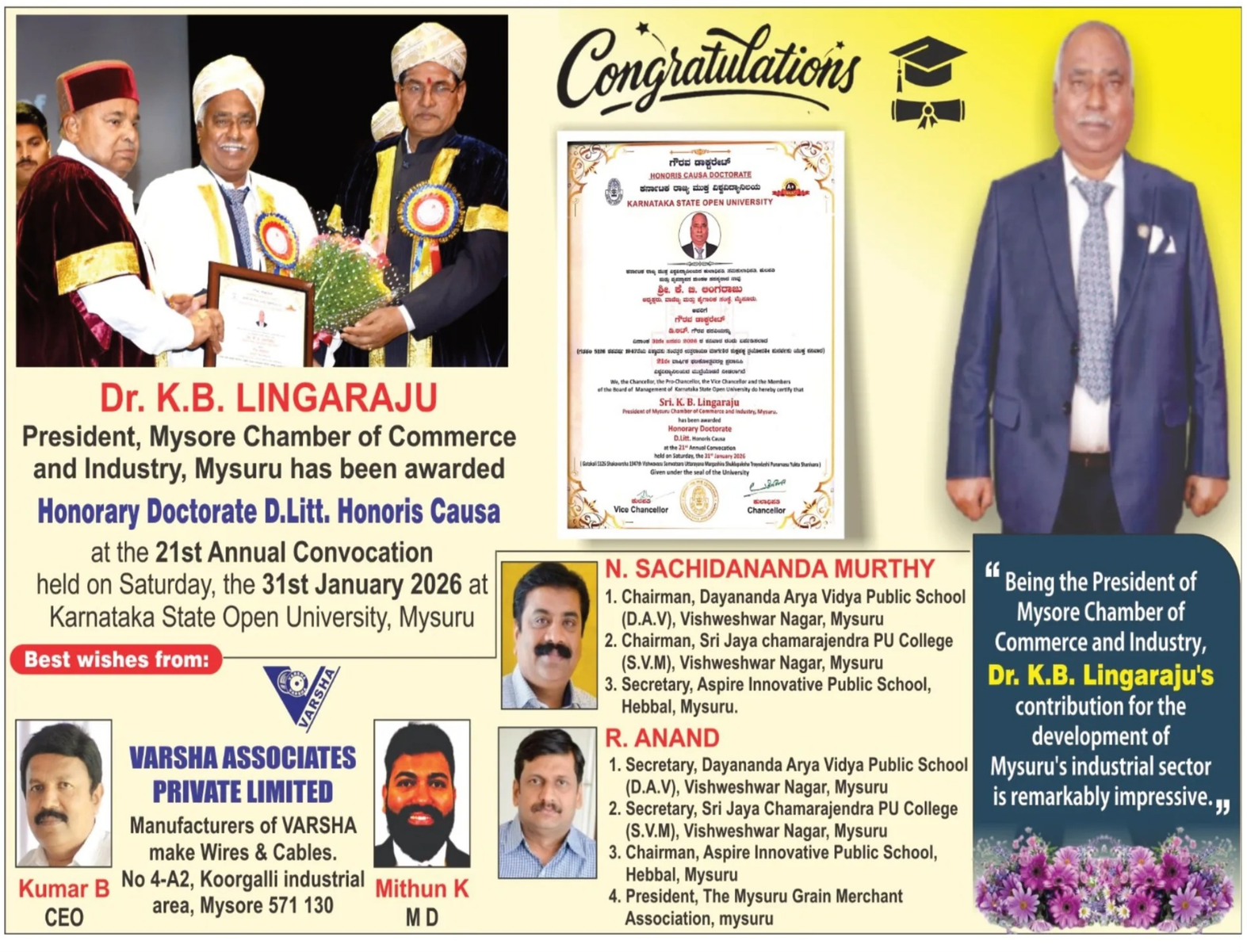
Areas affected on February 7: Regions under the Ontikoppalu 11 kV feeder, including V.V. Mohalla 4th Main Road, 5th Main Road, Gokulam Main Road, Nalapak Hotel area, and surrounding localities, according to a press release by the Executive Engineer, V.V. Mohalla Division, CESC (Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation).

Vishwakarma Scheme Expo in Mysuru

MYSURU

An exhibition will be organised under the Prime Minister Vishwakarma Scheme at Nazarbad Nanjaraj Bahadur Chhatra, Mysuru, from February 12 to 14, by the MSME–DFO Office of the Government of India, Bengaluru. Only registered artisans under the Prime Minister Vishwakarma Scheme will be permitted to participate in the exhibition and showcase their products. Interested artisans may submit their applications in the prescribed format, along with photographs of their products, to the District Industries Centre office. For further details, artisans may contact the District Industries Centre office located on New Sayyajirao Road at Phone No. 0821-2449810, according to a press release issued by the Joint Director of the District Industries Centre.

eom"Cleanliness Marathon" Programme Mysuru As per the directions of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, a "Cleanliness Marathon" programme will be organised across the country on February 8, with the objective of Swachh Survekshan 2025–26 and the theme "Public Participation in Cleanliness." In Mysuru, the programme will be held from 6:00 am to 9:00 am at the premises of Kote Anjaneya Swamy Temple, in front of the Palace. Officials and staff (Group A, B, C, and D) of Central and State Government departments functioning within Mysuru city limits, as well as contract employees, are mandatorily required to participate and create awareness on cleanliness, the Deputy Commissioner said in a press release.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3. Secretary, Aspire Innovative Public School, Hebbal, Mysuru.
R. ANAND
1. Secretary, Dayananda Arya Vidya Public School (D.A.V), Vishweshwar Nagar, Mysuru
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3. Chairman, Aspire Innovative Public School, Hebbal, Mysuru
4. President, The Mysuru Grain Merchant Association, mysuru
"Being the President of Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dr. K.B. Lingaraju's contribution for the development of Mysuru's industrial sector is remarkably impressive."

QUICK READ

Bowring Institute secretary files complaint over threats

Bengaluru

The Bowring Institute management has lodged a complaint with the cyber police alleging that unknown persons have been sending abusive and threatening messages using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs) and making calls from abroad. Institute Secretary H.S. Srikanth, who also approached Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh, said the callers were concealing their identities by using international SIM cards. A preliminary probe revealed that the calls were allegedly made at the behest of a few former club members who were disqualified earlier. Their petitions challenging the disqualification were dismissed by a court in April last year. Since then, random threatening calls have reportedly been made to members, including women. An FIR has been registered.

Sankasta Chaturthi celebrated

Bengaluru

Sankasta Chaturthi was celebrated with religious fervour at the Sri Shakti Mahaganapathi Temple on Kannurahalli Road in Hoskote town on Friday. The deity Lord Ganesha was adorned with special floral decorations, and elaborate abhisheka and poojas were performed on the occasion. A large number of devotees, including Shobha Muniraju, participated in the rituals and offered prayers seeking the blessings of Lord Ganesha. The senior priest said the temple observes Sankasta Chaturthi every month, in addition to conducting daily morning and evening poojas and special rituals during festivals.

First phase of Business Corridor to be completed in 18 months: DCM DK Shivakumar

Deputy Chief Minister says compensation, TDR clarity and faster e-khata approvals will ease land issues

BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar said the first phase of the ambitious Bangalore Business Corridor project would be completed within the next one and a half years. He also clarified that while a committee involving a Central government secretary and the BMRCL chief had discussed a metro fare hike, no official communication had been received by him so far.

Addressing the media at Vidhana Soudha, Shivakumar said he recently held a review meeting with officials of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) on the progress of the Bangalore Business Corridor, covering both the northern and southern stretches. During the meeting, compensation cheques, certificates and Transferable Development Rights (TDRs) were distributed to landowners who had given up land for the project.

He said compensation was being provided generously to ensure smooth execution. "In some cases, landowners have received 35% of the developed commercial land as compensation, while others have been paid through cheques and TDRs. We have given three times the market value for revenue land and twice the market value for land within BBMP limits," he said. More than 650 landowners have consented to part with their land, and compensation has already been distributed to around 400 of them.

Addressing confusion over TDR issuance, the DCM said BDA would issue TDRs for land under its jurisdiction, while the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) would do so for land under its limits. He directed officials to issue TDRs within 10 days, assuring that they would be valued at double the market rate.

On e-khata delays, Shivakumar said a meeting was held with the Urban Development Department secretary and e-khata officials. Applications must be decided within two days, and a 100-member review team has been formed to resolve issues. "A system is in place to issue 60% of e-khatas within 24 hours. Of 9.34 lakh applications, 9.31 lakh have already been disposed of," he said.

He added that around 7,000 applications seeking conversion from B-khata to A-khata were pending due to mapping issues. Officials have now been instructed to conduct onsite surveys and approve conversions within 15 days, he said.

B'luru to get dedicated electric vehicle city, 80 acres identified near city

BENGALURU

Consultation with EV majors, IT-BT officials charts roadmap for integrated ecosystem

Karnataka is moving a step closer to establishing a dedicated electric vehicle (EV) city, with nearly 80 acres of land identified for developing a comprehensive EV ecosystem aimed at strengthening the State's leadership in clean mobility. The proposed facility will bring testing, validation, research and development, and certification under one roof, enabling faster and more efficient EV manufacturing.

According to officials, land parcels within a 100-km radius of Bengaluru are being explored, with Tumakuru, Ramanagara and Chikkaballapur emerging as key contenders. Given the space constraints within the city, peripheral locations are seen as ideal for accommodating large testing tracks, laboratories, charging infrastructure and allied facilities required for EV development.

The project gained momentum following a consultation meeting that brought together major EV industry players and officials from the IT-BT Department. The deliberations focused on shaping the structure of the EV city and identifying industry requirements to build a robust, future-ready ecosystem. An industry consortium is expected to submit detailed recommendations on developing facilities that support the entire EV lifecycle—from design and prototyping to testing, certification and pre-market validation.

Officials said the EV city is being designed to cater to companies of all sizes. Start-ups will benefit from access to basic infrastructure and shared facilities, mid-sized firms will receive research and testing support, while large manufacturers will gain from advanced R&D and validation capabilities. This inclusive approach is intended to ensure that the ecosystem supports innovation at every stage of EV development.

The proposed campus will feature dedicated testing tracks, state-of-the-art laboratories, charging infrastructure, certification centres and R&D hubs in a single, integrated location. Such a plug-and-play environment is expected to significantly reduce time-to-market by allowing manufacturers to move seamlessly from concept to certified vehicle.

Once operational, the EV city is expected to redefine how electric vehicles are developed and tested in India. By combining policy support with world-class infrastructure, Karnataka aims to accelerate the adoption of clean mobility while creating jobs and boosting industrial growth.

With the largest concentration of EV startups in the country, Karnataka already plays a leading role in electric mobility innovation. The proposed EV city is expected to further cement Bengaluru's reputation as India's electric vehicle capital and attract global investors and technology partners.

By enabling local testing and validation, the EV city will help manufacturers cut logistics costs and reduce dependence on facilities outside the State. Faster certification and validation processes will allow quicker market entry, helping Karnataka-based EV companies remain competitive in India's rapidly evolving electric mobility landscape.

MINORITY WELFARE PROGRAMME...

Housing and Minority Welfare Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan distributed benefits at a Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation programme at Haj Bhavan, Bengaluru. Chief Minister's Political Secretary Naseer Ahmed, Council Member Balkis Banu, KMDC President B.K. Altaf Khan, Haj Committee President Tipu, former Wakf Board President Anwar Basha and Maulana Maqsud Imran were present.

CID cyber officers' operation: 13 arrested for aiding mule bank accounts

BENGALURU

The Cyber Crime Division of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) has intensified its crackdown on mule bank accounts, arresting 13 persons for allegedly facilitating cyber frauds by providing bank account details to cybercrime syndicates. The arrests followed a statewide operation launched against individuals who procure or misuse bank accounts of unsuspecting citizens in exchange for money.

According to officials, the CID has registered 14 cases across various district CEN police stations as part of the drive. Cybercriminals increasingly rely on mule accounts to route and launder funds siphoned from the public, making detection and recovery difficult. In response, cyber police have launched a focused campaign to identify and dismantle such networks.

Preliminary investigations indicate that Karnataka has nearly 42,000 suspected mule accounts. As an initial step, senior officers directed personnel at 29 CEN police stations, including those in Bengaluru, to collect address and identity details linked to 158 mule accounts by Friday evening. Based on these inputs, teams identified and questioned account holders across districts such as Bengaluru, Chitradurga, Gadag, Koppal and Dharwad.

Officials said that in the first phase, 158 suspected mule account holders were served notices and asked to furnish details regarding account operations and transactions. The arrests made on Thursday are part of this phase, and further action is expected as scrutiny widens.

Cybercrime officials cautioned that fraudsters often obtain bank details either without the account holder's knowledge or by luring them with promises of easy money. Funds generated from online scams are routed through these accounts, leaving genuine account holders unaware until a complaint is registered and the transaction trail leads investigators to them.

Several cases involving losses running into crores of rupees have been reported in the State due to the misuse of mule accounts. The CID warned that strict legal action will be taken against intermediaries and facilitators who knowingly or unknowingly allow their accounts to be used for cyber fraud. The department has urged the public to remain vigilant and avoid sharing banking details or accepting money for allowing account use.

Eshwarappa's son moves HC seeking Shivamogga civic polls; notice to govt

BENGALURU

Former Minister K.S. Eshwarappa's son and former Holalkere Zilla Panchayat member K.E. Kantesh has approached the Karnataka High Court seeking directions to the State government and the State Election Commission (SEC) to immediately conduct elections to the Shivamogga Municipal Corporation, whose term expired over two-and-a-half years ago.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Vibhu Bakhru and Justice C.M. Poonacha, while hearing a public interest litigation filed by Kantesh, issued notice to the State government.

The SEC has also issued notice to the Shivamogga Municipal Corporation Commissioner, directing him to file objections to the petition. The matter has been adjourned to April 21.

In his petition, Kantesh pointed out that elections to the Shivamogga Municipal Corporation were held on August 31, 2018, and the five-year term of the elected body ended on August 30, 2023. An Administrator was appointed on November 27, 2023, and the civic body has since been under administrative control for nearly two-and-a-half years.

The petitioner contended that as per law, elections to urban local bodies must be conducted within six months of the expiry of their term. However, no elections have been held for more than three years, with no valid justification offered by the authorities. He alleged that the absence of an elected council has resulted in stagnation of administration and developmental works in the city.

Kantesh further submitted that prolonged delay in holding elections is detrimental to democratic governance and infringes upon the constitutional rights of citizens. The petition claimed that failure to conduct elections encourages corruption, undermines accountability and violates the spirit of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, which mandate decentralisation of power to local bodies.

Seeking urgent relief, the petitioner urged the court to direct the authorities to issue an election notification within 15 days and ensure the restoration of elected local self-government in Shivamogga.

Car crashes into neighbour, vaults divider; CCTV clip viral

BENGALURU

A speeding car rammed into another vehicle and vaulted over the road divider on the Bannerghatta–Jigani main road, injuring occupants of both cars. The dramatic accident occurred near Nandanavana Layout and was captured on nearby CCTV cameras, with footage later going viral on social media. According to a complaint by Jayashree, a resident of the area, the collision took place when a car coming from the Jigani side near Begihalli Gate hit her vehicle at high speed as she returned from shopping with her family. The impact hurled the car across the divider. Her husband sustained injuries, and both vehicles were badly damaged.

Private bus from Bengaluru to Kalaburagi catches fire, 40 passengers escape

BENGALURU

A private bus travelling from Bengaluru to Kalaburagi caught fire and was completely gutted after crashing into an electric pole on the Tumakuru–Bengaluru National Highway 48 in the early hours of Friday. The incident occurred around 2.40 am near Hanumanthapura Gate in Nelamangala taluk.

The bus, operated by Sanjana Travels, reportedly lost control while moving slowly through a stretch where road construction work was in progress. Police said the driver first hit a road divider and then rammed into an electric pole, following which the vehicle caught fire within moments. A short circuit is suspected to have triggered the blaze.

There were around 40 passengers on board at the time. The driver, who noticed the fire immediately, acted swiftly and ensured all passengers were evacuated from the bus. No injuries were reported. Fire brigade personnel rushed to the spot and brought the flames under control. However, the bus was reduced to ashes due to the intensity of the fire. Luggage stored in the baggage compartment was also destroyed. Nelamangala traffic police visited the scene and are investigating the incident.

UPGRADED TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

Cabinet clears AI-powered software to curb fake news, hate speech

BENGALURU

The State Cabinet has decided to implement a state-of-the-art Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered "Social Media Analytics Solution" to curb the growing spread of fake news, hate speech, misinformation and malicious campaigns across digital platforms. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, with in-principle administrative approval granted for the project at an estimated cost of ₹67.26 crore.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister H.K. Patil said the rapid pace of information technology development had rendered traditional monitoring mechanisms inadequate. "Misinformation spreads at great speed and scale. AI technology will help the government take swift and effective action to prevent fake news and hate speech," he said.

The Minister clarified that while social media platforms will be monitored, the digital platforms of mainstream media organisations will remain outside the purview of the system. However, fake media organisations and malicious digital entities will be covered. He emphasised that the software would function without human intervention and that there would be no direct government interference, as the system is fully AI-driven.

The proposed AI system will analyse vast volumes of digital content across social media websites and messaging platforms to instantly identify and flag harmful narratives and activities. These include the spread of fake news, hate speech, misinformation, online abuse, extremist recruitment and even crimes such as child trafficking. Officials said the aim is to detect and counter digital threats in real time, something that conventional methods struggle to achieve due to the sheer volume and complexity of online data.

Each district will be provided with dedicated user licences, and trained personnel will be deployed to operate the system effectively. The software will integrate advanced Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) and AI technologies, enabling deep data collection, enrichment and real-time analysis. A central Command and Control Centre will function as the coordination hub, facilitating decision-making, inter-district coordination and reporting.

By generating actionable intelligence, district-level mapping and ready-to-use analytical reports, the system is expected to serve as an early warning mechanism for administrators. Officials said it would strengthen governance, enhance security, build public trust and support data-driven decision-making across the State, while addressing the challenges posed by the evolving digital information landscape.

QUICK READ

Kolar police nab five reckless bike riders

Kolar

Malur police caught five men for dangerous bike stunts near Lakkur village in Malur taluk. The accused, all from Bengaluru—Syed Nahim, Mohammed Injuman, Iqbal Sheikh Vikram, and Mohammed Tohid—were performing risky wheelies on public roads. Police seized the bikes and have taken the men into custody for questioning. The arrests were made under the Malur police station jurisdiction, aiming to curb reckless riding and ensure public safety. Local residents praised the swift action, noting that such stunts could have caused serious accidents. Investigations are ongoing to determine if others were involved.

Chikkaballapur residents to face temporary power outage

Chikkaballapur

The Chikkaballapur City Division has announced a temporary power disruption on February 8 due to tree branch removal near B.B. Road, Wards 3 and 24. The work is linked to the construction of the Chikkaballapur City Petrol Bunk and the F-07 Local Feeder from the City Sub-Power Station. The 11 KV power line in the affected area will be shut from 10 am to 3 pm. Executive Engineer P.G. Ramesh Kumar requested residents and consumers to cooperate during this period. Authorities assured that the work is essential to ensure safe and reliable electricity supply in the future.

Revenue records digitised for farmers to get titles

The minister said the govt will issue title deeds, declaring settlements as villages, targeting 2.2 lakh families in 2.5 years

CHITRADURGA

Revenue Minister Krishna Bhairegowda said the state government has digitised 63.58 crore old revenue records under the Bhu Suraksha scheme to prevent damage and misuse of original land documents.

Speaking at a press conference at the District Collector's Office here on Friday, he said farmers will soon be able to get certified copies of old revenue records online. This will reduce unnecessary visits to taluk offices and help eliminate middlemen.

The minister said the government aims to bring administration to people's doorsteps. Undocumented settlements like Tanda, Hatti, Hadi, and Janvasati are being declared revenue villages and title deeds are being issued. The government has set a target to distribute title deeds to 2.20 lakh families within two and a half years.

He said 1.20 lakh families have already received title deeds last year. The remaining 1.10 lakh families will receive them at a major programme in Haveri on February fourteen. Along with title deeds, land registration is also being completed, and e-property records are being created in gram panchayats to give full ownership rights.

To prevent fake land deals, Aadhaar linking with RTC records has been started. It was found that many land accounts were in the names of deceased persons. So far, over eleven lakh land accounts have been corrected through an e-KYC drive.

The minister said pending revenue cases have been reduced significantly and disposal time has come down from 250 days to 84 days. New Praja Soudha offices will be built in 49 new taluks.

He added that land survey work for nearly 1.89 lakh farmers was completed in one year. Officials and local leaders attended the press conference.

Chitradurga revenue officials directed to complete Pauti Campaign

Revenue Minister Krishna Bhairegowda has instructed officials to complete the Pauti account conversion campaign and application podi cases by the end of March to support farmers. Speaking at a progress review meeting at the District Collector's Office, he noted that out of 1,89,435 Pauti accounts, only 19,839 have been converted, with 1,21,930 still pending. Officials were urged to resolve disputes promptly and ensure efficient work, except in Molakalmuru taluk where progress is better. The minister also directed inclusion of 418 inhabited areas as revenue villages and highlighted initiatives for Kadugolla caste certificates and revenue land recovery.

'Most child sexual abuse cases involve known persons'

CHITRADURGA

The program, organized by multiple child protection bodies, revealed POCSO cases often involve family or acquaintances, emphasizing that ensuring child safety must start within the home

Cases of sexual abuse against children are rising at an alarming rate, and in nearly seventy to ninety percent of cases, the accused are people known to the child, said Dr. K.T. Thippeswamy, member of the Karnataka State Child Rights Protection Commission.

He spoke while inaugurating a one-day training program on child rights and protection laws for officers and staff of child care institutions, held at the District Bala Bhavan auditorium in the city.

The program was jointly organized by the State Child Rights Protection Commission, Child Protection Directorate, Zilla Panchayat, Women and Child Development Department, and the District Child Protection Unit.

Analyzing cases registered under the POCSO Act, Dr. Thippeswamy said investigations revealed that fathers, elder brothers, relatives, teachers, friends, and neighbors were often involved, stressing that child safety must begin within the home.

He referred to a recent incident in north India, where three children died by suicide due to addiction to online games, and urged parents to carefully monitor mobile phone and internet usage.

The mental condition of children placed in foster care because of parental disputes is extremely sensitive, he said, adding that such children need emotional care along with legal protection.

Tumkur Child Welfare Committee member Dr. S.P. Tavikumar said working in child protection is not just a duty, but a meaningful service that supports vulnerable lives.

He said the satisfaction gained from this work cannot be found elsewhere, and called for commitment and compassion among officers.

The program was attended by officials including Deputy Director K.H. Vijayakumar, Women and Child Development Officer Gangappa, District Narrator D. Manjunath, committee members Jagadish, Ranganath, and staff.

Iqbal Hussain stressed well-equipped Gram Panchayat buildings ensure efficient service, praising officials, staff, and villagers for timely completion

Gram Panchayat is a temple of public service: MLA Iqbal Hussain

RAMANAGARA

MLA Iqbal Hussain said a Gram Panchayat is like a temple where people's problems are heard and solutions are found, and every citizen must share responsibility for village development.

He was speaking after inaugurating the newly constructed Gram Panchayat building at Vibhutekere village in Kailancha hobli of the taluk. He said the government has focused on strengthening local bodies through decentralisation and empowering Gram Panchayats to function effectively.

Iqbal Hussain said well equipped buildings are essential for smooth administration and better public service. He described the Gram Panchayat as a place where people bring both their difficulties and happiness, and where officials must respond with dedication. He appreciated the efforts of officers, staff, and villagers who completed the building within a few months after the Bhoomi Pooja.

He said all Gram Panchayats deserve such facilities and assured that the government and elected representatives have provided funds for the building. He added that plans are being considered to construct an upper floor as well and efforts will be made to release additional funds. He urged the Gram Panchayat to work with more commitment for village welfare.

Gram Panchayat President Sunita Nagaraj Singh said the village badly needed a proper building. She said the administrative board, with support from villagers, officials, government funds, and MLA grants, successfully built the new structure at a suitable location. She added that public cooperation in cleanliness, sanitation, and village activities can help create a model village.

Former MLA and District Guarantee Committee President K Raju, Taluk Guarantee Committee President V H Raju, Authority President A B Chethankumar, PDO B K Gomathi, Vice President Mangalagouramma Giriappa, board members, officials, and villagers were present.

Urgent Call to End Violence against Women

CHIKKABALLAPURA

February six is observed as the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation with this year's strong slogan, "Enough is enough." The day aims to raise global awareness about a harmful and violent practice that continues to affect millions of girls and women.

Female Genital Mutilation, commonly known as FGM, involves cutting or removing parts of the external genitalia of girls. According to the World Health Organization, this practice is based on superstition and has no medical benefit. It is usually carried out on girls below the age of fifteen, often without their consent or understanding.

In many cases, young girls are restrained, blindfolded, and forced to undergo the painful act. No medical procedures or hygiene standards are followed, and victims are treated in an inhuman manner. After the act, girls are often sent home without proper medical care, sometimes given only traditional remedies, leading to lifelong health problems.

FGM is still practiced in parts of Africa, Asia, and other regions, despite being illegal in many countries. The practice is often justified as a way to control women's sexuality and prepare them for marriage. However, it causes severe physical pain, repeated infections, complications during menstruation, childbirth, and emotional trauma.

Even in the twenty first century, women continue to fight against such cruel traditions. Dr Mahesh Kumar, District Health and Family Welfare Officer, said superstitions must end and women's rights must be protected. He urged people to seek correct information from government hospitals or call the free health helpline 104 for guidance and support.

Doctors urged to speak Kannada with patients

CHITRADURGA

Dr. Purushottam Bilimale, chairman of the Kannada Development Authority, emphasized that doctors should communicate with patients in Kannada to make treatment more effective. Speaking at the 'Kannada Implementation Progress Review Meeting' at Chitradurga Medical College and Research Institute, he said medical services should focus on public service rather than just financial gain.

"Combining global medical knowledge with the local language makes it easier to cure patients," he added. Dr. Bilimale also suggested that college logos and nameplates should prioritize Kannada over English.

Authority Secretary Dr. Santosh Hanagalla supported this, emphasizing the importance of Kannada in all official communications. Director Dr. B.Y. Yuvaraj highlighted that administrative work at the college is already conducted fully in Kannada. He proudly stated that students achieved the second-highest marks among medical colleges in the state, placing the college seventh overall. Plans to start postgraduate courses in 2026-27 were also announced.

The meeting encouraged medical students and teachers to write research papers and articles in Kannada. A Kannada Sangha has been formed, and cultural events, including Kannada Rajyotsava, are celebrated actively.

Authority member Dr. A.B. Ramachandrappa added that speaking in one's mother tongue strengthens human connections. The meeting was attended by literary scholar Prof. C. Shivalingappa, Academic Registrar Dr. Chandrika N., Dr. Megha G.H., Kannada Culture Department Assistant Director B.M. Gurunath, department heads, and college staff.

Surveyor suspended over illegal silk market survey

CHIKKABALLAPURA

The District Magistrate, G. Prabhu, has suspended surveyor Chandrashekhar Murthy H.C., who works at the Assistant Director of Land Records Office in Shidlaghatta Taluk. The suspension follows allegations that he carried out unauthorized boundary survey work to benefit a tenant in Hanumanthapur village.

The controversy involves S.No.178, where a tenant reportedly built a shed illegally. Meanwhile, the government had officially surveyed S. No.181 in the same village to mark the boundary for a new high-tech silk market. Investigations revealed that Murthy bypassed official procedures and conducted measurements favoring the tenant, ignoring standard rules.

The Assistant Director of Land Records, Shidlaghatta, confirmed the irregularities and recommended immediate action.

Chitradurga to celebrate Kayak Sharan's Jayanti

CHITRADURGA

The district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Municipal Council of Chitradurga will jointly organize the Jayanti celebration of revered saints Kayak Sharan, including Madara Channaiah, Madara Dhulaiah, Dohara Kakkaiah, Urilinga Peddi, and Samagara Haralaiah. The event is scheduled for February 10 at 11 am in the Deputy Commissioner's office hall.

Planning and Statistics Minister and District Incharge D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the function, while MLA K.C. Virendra Pappi will preside. Other dignitaries attending include Hosadurga MLA B.G. Govindappa, Challakere MLA T. Raghumurthy, and MP Govinda M. Karajol.

Guests of honor include Molakalmuru MLA N.Y. Gopalakrishna, Holalkere MLA M. Chandrappa, Legislative Council members Chidananda M. Gowda, K.S. Naveen, and D.T. Srinivas, along with several heads of development boards and commissions such as Dr. B. Yogesh Babu, G.S. Manjunath, P. Raghu, H.B. Manjappa, M.K. Tajpir, and R. Shivanna Ganjigatte. Prominent Dalit leaders and former municipal heads will also attend, along with local elected representatives.

ARTS AND ATHLETICS

Sports and culture shape responsible public servants: District Magistrate

CHIKKABALLAPURA

District Magistrate G. Prabhu said sports, literature, culture, folklore, and fine arts play a key role in shaping a balanced and cultured personality, along with academic knowledge.

He was speaking after inaugurating a two day district level sports meet and cultural competitions for government employees at Sir M V Stadium in the city. The event was organised jointly by the District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Youth Empowerment and Sports Department, and the District Government Employees Association.

Prabhu said India is the world's largest democracy and the Constitution gives important responsibility and dignity to the executive system. He said government officers and employees must treat their authority as a social duty and serve people honestly and responsibly.

Referring to the present era, he said the world is moving fast with artificial intelligence and technology offering quick solutions to many problems. While knowledge is easily available through books and technology, he said sports, culture, literature, and arts are essential to build character and a healthy personality.

In today's stressful and mechanical lifestyle, government employees should actively take part in sports and cultural activities to maintain physical fitness and mental peace. He urged employees of all departments to work transparently, protect the dignity of their offices, and serve citizens sincerely. He said public servants must resolve people's problems within the law and ensure justice to taxpayers.

The district magistrate assured that he is ready to stand by employees in matters of welfare and genuine difficulties. He said the sports and cultural meet is not just an event but a platform to unite government employees as one family.

QUICK READ

Crocodile, turtle illegally kept at Mumbai home

MUMBAI

A shocking incident has come to light from Mumbai's Juhu area, where a crocodile and a turtle were allegedly being kept illegally inside a residential house, Mumbai Police said on Friday. In a joint operation conducted by the Forest Department, Mumbai Crime Branch Unit-9 and an NGO, both animals were safely rescued. A case has been registered against 29-year-old Imran Ismail Sheikh under the Wildlife Protection Act. According to the Mumbai Police, the Forest Department received a tip-off that a crocodile was being kept in a house in Juhu. Following this, on the instructions of a senior forest officer, Forest Guard Roshan Binde from the Andheri Range office contacted Crime Branch Unit-9.

Nishikant Dubey vows to set up library of published

NEW DELHI

Amid the controversy that arose after the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, challenged the Central government over its objection to quoting excerpts from an unpublished memoir of former Army Chief General M.M. Naravane, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey on Friday said he will set up a library accessible to everyone to provide information on the contribution of the Nehru-Gandhi family, including published and banned books. Dubey, who has often targeted the Congress party and the Gandhi family, on Thursday intensified his attack by releasing a list of 40 books that he claimed expose the 'real history' of India and alleged controversies linked to Congress' past governance.

Vaishnaw Addresses Metro Plans for Jammu, Kerala Rail Projects

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw addressed Metro plans, stalled rail projects, and environmental challenges during a lively Rajya Sabha session

NEW DELHI

A lively Question Hour and Zero Hour session in the Rajya Sabha on Friday saw Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw respond to a wide range of concerns related to infrastructure development, including the possibility of Metro services in Jammu, stalled railway projects due to land and environmental issues, demands for premium train connectivity, and ongoing initiatives in Kerala.

During Question Hour, BJP-nominated MP Gulam Ali sought clarity on plans to introduce a Metro system in Jammu. In response, Vaishnaw said he would pass the query to Manohar Lal Khattar, who oversees Metro-related matters. However, he also highlighted the technical complexities of operating rail systems in high-altitude regions such as Jammu and Kashmir.

The operation of rail in high altitude areas is complicated; we should have a special design for the trains in Jammu and Kashmir, Vaishnaw said. He added that a suitable train design has already been prepared and that decisions are expected soon, signaling progress toward customized solutions that could support improved urban mobility, potentially including Metro-like services in the region.

The minister also addressed concerns raised by farmers, stating that the Railways would not lay spurs off main railway lines where such construction could damage apple orchards. He acknowledged that agricultural impact remains a sensitive issue and assured members that farmers' objections are being taken into account during project planning.

During Zero Hour, Vaishnaw turned his attention to broader challenges slowing railway expansion across the country. He pointed specifically to the semi-high-speed Silver Line rail project in Kerala, noting that the project faces serious environmental concerns.

The Silver Line project has a huge environmental impact, he told the House, underscoring why progress has been difficult.

He further stressed that land acquisition remains one of the biggest bottlenecks for railway development nationwide. The state government should help the Central government, as land acquisition is really hard, and so many railway projects are pending because of this, Vaishnaw said, appealing for stronger cooperation from state authorities.

Thiruvananthapuram Emerges as BJP's Strongest Bastion in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The state capital district has emerged as the strongest political base of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Kerala, a shift underlined by the party's historic takeover of the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation. The victory marks the first time in over four decades that the civic body has slipped out of the control of the CPI(M)-led Left, signaling a major realignment in the state's political landscape.

The BJP wrested control from the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front, which had maintained an uninterrupted grip on the corporation for more than 40 years. Party strategists now view the district as central to their roadmap for the upcoming state Assembly elections, seeing the result as proof that sustained organisational efforts can yield breakthroughs even in traditionally difficult terrain.

In the 101-member Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, the BJP won 50 seats, emerging as the single largest party. The Left secured 29 seats, while the United Democratic Front (UDF), led by the Indian National Congress, managed 20. Two Independents were also elected, one of whom later extended support to the BJP, enabling it to cross the 51-seat majority mark and formally form the council.

For the BJP, the result represents far more than a municipal success. Party leaders say it validates years of grassroots mobilisation, cadre-building, and targeted outreach in an area long dominated by the Left and Congress. The win has bolstered confidence that Kerala's political terrain, often considered resistant to the BJP, can be contested and gradually reshaped.

BJP Leaders Laud Modi's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' as Inspiring Lesson Beyond Exams

NEW DELHI

BJP leaders praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's student interaction, calling 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' inspiring, historic, and deeply impactful.

Several BJP leaders and Union Ministers on Friday lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his interaction with students during the ninth edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha, describing it as an inspiring initiative that offered life lessons extending far beyond examinations.

BJP MP Hema Malini said the programme stood out for the way the Prime Minister connected with children like a teacher, motivating them while simplifying complex issues. It was the first time we witnessed such a programme. He explained everything so easily that even we learnt a lot from it, she said, highlighting Modi's ability to communicate with clarity and warmth.

Echoing similar views, BJP MP Arun Govil described Pariksha Pe Charcha as a beautiful initiative that directly addressed students' stress and anxieties. He noted that the Prime Minister responded to students' questions with sensitivity and empathy. Some students recited such beautiful poems. Overall, it was a very encouraging and meaningful programme, Govil said. Union Minister of State Jayant Chaudhary pointed to Modi's unique style of communication, saying the programme reflected the aspirations of the nation through its children. Just look at their talent, curiosity and eagerness to learn. For them, it is such a special moment to interact directly with the Prime Minister at his residence and ask questions openly, he remarked.

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that every point made by the Prime Minister carried a deeper meaning. He noted that Modi used simple examples to convey powerful ideas about resilience, focus, and personal growth. Through small examples, he conveyed very powerful ideas, Pradhan said. BJP MP Ravi Kishan, who attended the event, termed the interaction historic and praised the Prime Minister's sharpness and awareness even at the age of 75. He is so updated and alert; he is blessed with divine grace. Listening to him every day teaches us something new, he said. Union Minister Ravneet Singh Bittu used the occasion to take a political swipe at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. He said that while the Prime Minister was teaching children the art of success through Pariksha Pe Charcha, others could also benefit by listening.

SC DA Order to Cost WB Over Rs 10,000 Cr Immediately

KOLKATA

The Supreme Court's verdict directing the West Bengal Government to clear long-pending Dearness Allowance (DA) arrears for state government employees and pensioners is expected to place a significant strain on the state exchequer.

Officials estimate that compliance with the ruling will cost the government a little over Rs 10,000 crore immediately, while the long-term financial impact could rise to nearly Rs 42,000 crore.

According to a senior official from the state Finance Department, these figures are provisional. An exercise has already started to assess the exact expenditure on this count. The final figure will be known only after the process is completed, the official said on Friday.

Shutdown disrupts life in Manipur

IMPHAL

Normal life in Manipur's Churachandpur district was badly affected on Friday as several tribal organisations observed a total shutdown in the Kuki-Zo inhabited hill district to protest the participation and involvement of MLAs from their community in the formation of the state government, officials said. Protest rallies were also organised on Friday on the same issue in Tengnoupal and other mountainous districts of the state. A police official in Imphal said that agitators, holding sticks, stopped vehicles in parts of Churachandpur district headquarters town. Government and private offices, shops, markets, banks and educational institutions remained closed, and vehicles stayed off the roads.

The Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO), Kuki Women Organisation for Human Rights (KWOHR), Joint Forum of Seven (JF7) and a few other Kuki-Zo tribal organisations called the 24-hour total shutdown in Churachandpur district headquarters.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I, SNEHA DAS CHOUDHURY, D/o VISWANADHAM VANGADA, Ex. wife of MRINMOY DAS CHOUDHURY, Flat No: 301, 4th Floor, House No: 90, A Dream House Residency, 2nd cross, 2nd Main Road, New Thippasandra, Puttappa Layout, HAL 3, Bangalore, Karnataka - 560075 declare that I got divorce from my husband vide court decree Petition No. A-2637/2024, dated 23.09.2025. Further I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as SNEHA VANGADA.

NAME CHANGE

I, **ZARIN** W/o. Ajaz Ahmed, Residing at No.38, Netaji Road, Frazer Town Bnaglore 560005, have changed my name to **ZARIN AJAZ** Vide Affidavit dated 05/02/2026 before notary CHANDRASHEKAR. M Bengaluru.

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, **Leelavathi,** MY Original register gift deed dated 04-05-2006 in respect of the property bearing Sy No.293/1A1paikip1 total measuring 1 acre 24 guntas out of this executed only 0.06.00.00 guntas the said property situated at Hongahalli Village, Belagola Hobli, Srirangapatna Taluk, Mandya District as document **No.SRP-1-00487-2006-07, CD No.SRPD18,** was lost on dated 06-02-2026 in KRS in this connection filed the complaint before the Mandya Police Station in this connection endorsement issued on **06-02-2026** if any one trace please intimates me or said Police within 3 days.

M.Guruprasad
Advocate, No.2, M.Lingaiah Building, V.V.Road, Mandya-571401.
Mob:9242221603

CH CLASSIFIEDS
To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

IN THE COURT OF THE ADDL CIVIL JUDGE AND J.M.F.C AT DODDABALLAPURA
C.Misc No. 1219/2025
PETITIONER: Sri. Nagaraju S/o Late Lakkayya, Aged about 43years, R/at Chikkamankanala, Koligere, Bangalore Rural-561204 V/S
RESPONDENT: Register of Birth and Deaths Rep. by the Thasildar Doddaballapura, Doddaballapura Taluk
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the petitioners above named have filed above for the relief of registering death certificate of their grand father of petitioner namely Sri. Anjinappa S/o Late Chikkanna died on 01/02/1998 resident of Chikkamankanala Village, Doddabelavangala Hobli, Doddaballapura Taluk, and any person/s who are interested to be present before the Hon'ble court on 11.03.2026 at 11-00 am to contest the case and intend to relay in support of there defense. Take notice that in default of appearance on the day before mentioned the case will be here and determined in the absence.
Give under my hand and seal of the court on the 5th day of February 2026
By Order of the Court
Chief Ministrial Officer, Prl Civil Judge & JMFC, Doddaballapura
Advocate for petitioner: **Reddy Shekar.L,** Doddaballapura, Advocate, Doddaballapura

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public are hereby informed that my client **Sri.Nikhil Ranjan C/O Praveen Kumar Singh,** residing at #95/1,Asheerawad Apartment, AGS Layout,RMV 2nd Stage, Mathikere, Bangalore North, Karnataka-560054, My client are willing to purchase the property by availing a loan with Piramal Finance limited by the present property owner Sri.M.G. Nataraju S/O Late Govindaiah, Registered Sale Deed Document No.GNR- 1-02673-2025-26, dated: 10-07-2025, my client further states that any disputes his ownership or possession of the schedule property member of the public are hereby notified that if anyone having any adverse claim in respect of the said property hereby advised to place their claim with appropriate written evidence. please note that claims received without written evidence within 7 Days from the date of publication of this notice there after will not be entertained.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY : All that piece and parcel of the Property bearing Site No.35, E-PID No.9893708809, PID No.99-117-35, Situated at Shathyappa Compound, Ashwathnagar, Geddalahalli, Kasaba Hobli, Bangalore North Taluk, BBMP Ward No.35, Measuring: East to West: 30 Feet & North to South:40 in all measuring 1200 Sq.ft, and bounded on the : **East by:** Site No.34, **West by:** Site No.36, **North by:** Road, **South by:** Site No. 30.
HARISHA .S, Advocate
 # 1479. DRLS PLAZA.
UNION BANK BUILDING. T DASARAHALLI, Bengaluru-560057. Mob No. 9060950265.

BANK SHIFTING
We are pleased to announce the shifting of our BM Road, Bidadi Branch to a more convenient and spacious location. with effect from 09-02-2026. The new address is: State Bank of India, B.M. Road Bidadi, Vijaya Complex, Kenchankuppe, Bidadi , Karnakata 562109, Our Telephone numbers are 9071530967 / 797. We also advise that locker services may be interrupted from 07-02-2026 to 09-02-2026 due to transport and re-installation of the lockers at the new premises. If you intend to remove the contents of your locker, kindly do so before the date of shifting, to avoid last minute rush. Also, you have the option to change or close the facility. We look forward to serving you better from the new location.
Sd/-
(Branch Manager)

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LTD.
Manappuram Home Finance Ltd
Regd. Off: At 8/596 A, Padmaprabha Building, Near Sreerama Swami Temple, Cherppu - Thriprayar Road, Thriprayar, Thrissur, Kerala - 680567
CORRIGENDUM
Demand Notice of our borrower **SHIVALINGAPPA KOTI** published in this newspaper on 25/11/2025 in which description of Loan details was mentioned as **NHL00260034551** which shall be read as SHIVALINGAPPA KOTI, MALLAVVA URF SHANTAKKA KOTI, NETRA KOTI, KAVITHA SAJIVAREDDI/**NHL00260034651**/HUBLI
Rest details of the notice will remain unchanged.
Date: 07/02/2026 **Sd/-**
Place: HUBLI **Authorized Officer**
Manappuram Home Finance Ltd

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform that my client proposes to purchase all that piece and parcel of Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) Vacant House Property bearing House **Site No.1483,** Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike e-Katha No. 1288/1483, PID No.8906141187, measuring **East to West 24.38 Meters** and **North to South 15.24 Meters,** in all measuring **371.55 Sq.Meters,** situated at Sector-I, Hosur Sarjapur Road Layout, Bangalore, attached to BANGALORE Sub Registration District and Bangalore Registration District from the Present Owner **Mr. RENUKA PRASAD.H.P,** S/o. H.R.Prakash, aged about 56 years, residing at No.551, 9th Cross, 7th Block, West Jayanagar, Bangalore-560070. Karnataka State, who claims the title to the above property by way of registered **Sale Deed Document No. No.12082/2002-03,** registered before the office of the sub registrar, Bangalore South Taluk.
And therefore, it is brought to the general notice of all concerned that persons or institutions who have any claim, charge, agreements, sale, mortgage, liens or demand of any sort if any over the said property, can state their objections if any for the alienations, giving in writing the full details of their claim, charge, collateral charge or demand whatsoever within **7 (SEVEN) Days** of this publication to the under mentioned and if such objections or details regarding any claim, charge, collateral charge or demand are not received within the above duration of 7 (SEVEN) Days, it will be construed that there is no objection for any person, persons or institutions regarding the alienation of the above said properties by the present land owner and that there is no subsisting valid claim, charge collateral charge or demand affecting the absolute titles claimed by the present land owner mentioned above. And no objection or claims of any kind in future will be entertained or considered as valid and binding on my client. That no one shall dispute the titles of my client acquired from the present land owner in any court of law thereafter.
K. Basker, B.B.A., LL.B, Advocate & Consultants
2nd Floor, "AVS Towers", Opp. Court Complex, Hosur-635109 **M: 9600221324**

CHAMUNDESHWARI ELECTRICITY SUPPLY CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
Corporate Office, Procurement Section, CESC, Mysuru-570017.
Telephone No: 9448994705
Website: www.cescmysore.org E-mail ID: gmpurc@cescmysore.org
Company Identity Number(CIN): U40109KA2004SGC035177
CESC/GM(P)/AGM(P-1)/2025-26/35489 Date: 04.02.2026
SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(E-PROCUREMENT PORTAL ONLY)
CESC, Mysore invites Short Term Tenders from eligible bidders for Manufacturing and Supply of Spun Poles.

Sl No.	Particulars	Enquiry no. / Date
1	Manufacturing and Supply of 11 Mtr Spun Pole to O & M **Mysuru Circle**	C2-6432/03-02-2026
2	Manufacturing and Supply of 11 Mtr Spun Pole to O & M **Mandya Circle**	C2-6433/03-02-2026
3	Manufacturing and Supply of 11 Mtr Spun Pole to O & M **Chamarajanagara-Kodagu Circle**	C2-6434/03-02-2026
4	Manufacturing and Supply of 11 Mtr Spun Pole to O & M **Hassan Circle**	C2-6435/03-02-2026

The details regarding Specification & participation in the tender can be obtained through e-procurement portal https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in on or after **05-02-2026**. For clarification contact help desk **+91-8046010000**, **+91-8068948777** or e-mail address **support@eprochelpdesk.com**.
For Electricity related complaints Call: 1912
DIPR/DDMYS/1616/KSMCA/915/2025-26 **Sd/- General Manager (Procurement), CESC, Mysuru.**

ಪುರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ ಮಳವಳ್ಳಿ, ಮಂಡ್ಯ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ–571430
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್ : itstaff_ulb_malavalli@yahoo.com
ದೂ:08231–242073
ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಪುಕಾಮ/ಆಶಾ/ಪ.ಅ/ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್/2025–26
ದಿ:02–02–2026
ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ
ಮಳವಳ್ಳಿ ಪುರಸಭಾ ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತಿಯ ದೇವಲಿಂಗಣಾಪುರದಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಘನತ್ಯಾಜ್ಯ ವಸ್ತು ನಿರ್ವಹಣಾ ಘಟಕದಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಯನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯುಳ್ಳ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿದೆ.
ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ : 01. ಕಾಮಗಾರಿ ಹೆಸರು : BIO-REMEDIATION/ BIO-MINING OF LEGACY WASTE AT DEVALINGANAPURA LAND FILL SITE OF TMC MALAVALLI AS PER CENTRAL POLLUTION BOARD GUIDELINES AND SWM RULES 2016(DMA/2025-26/SE7185). ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ (ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ) : 168.52. ಇ.ಎಮ್.ಡಿ ಮೊತ್ತ : ರೂ.3,37,000/–. ಅನುದಾನದ ವಿವರ : ಸ್ವಚ್ಛಭಾರತ 2.0/ಎನ್.ಜಿ.ಟಿ./ಇತರೆ ಪುರಸಭಾ ಅನುದಾನ.
ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಮುಖಾಂತರ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 09–02–2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 5.30 ಗಂಟೆಯೊಳಗೆ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬಹುದಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ:11–02–2026 ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಯನ್ನು ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್ https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in ನಲ್ಲಿ ಹಾಗೂ ಕಛೇರಿ ವೇಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಆರೋಗ್ಯ ಶಾಖೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.
ಸಹಿ/–ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ, ಪುರಸಭೆ, ಮಳವಳ್ಳಿ
ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಸನಿ–ಮಂ/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/765/2025–26

Tarikere Town Municipal Council, (TMC), Tarikere, Chikkamagaluru District
Website: www.tarikeretown.mrc.gov.in Phone : 08261-222233
E-Mail: ka.tarikere.tmc@gmail.com
No. TMC/AS/CR/274/2025-26 Date: 03.02.2026
Tender Notice
E-tenders are invited for the works approved under various projects of Tarikere Town Municipal Council through Karnataka Standard Tender Document (KSDT) and can be submitted through KPP portal. Interested registered agencies/ organizations should contact the website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in for tender details.

Sl No.	Work Indent Details	Last Date & Time for Submission of E-Tender	Date of Opening of Technical Bid	Date of Opening of Financial Bid
1	DMA/2025-26/SE7136	19.02.2026 at 17:30 PM	21.02.2026 at 11:00 AM	23.02.2026 at 11:00 AM
2	DMA/2025-26/SE5874/ CALL-4	19.02.2026 at 17:30 PM	21.02.2026 at 11:00 AM	23.02.2026 at 11:00 AM
3	DMA/2025-26/IND5271/ CALL-2	19.02.2026 at 17:30 PM	21.02.2026 at 11:00 AM	23.02.2026 at 11:00 AM
4	DMA/2024-25/IND4564/ CALL-3	19.02.2026 at 17:30 PM	21.02.2026 at 11:00 AM	23.02.2026 at 11:00 AM

Note: Any changes in the tender will be published on the e-portal only.
Sd/- Chief Officer , Tarikere Town Municipal Council, (TMC), Tarikere.
ವಾ.ಸಾ.ಸಂ.ಇ/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/ಚಿ/25–26/155/1778

QUICK READ

Gujarat export sectors to gain from India-EU free trade agreement

GANDHINAGAR

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) concluded between India and the European Union is expected to significantly expand export opportunities for Gujarat, particularly its southern region, by providing wide-ranging duty-free and preferential access to one of the world's largest import markets. The agreement marks a major step in India's efforts to deepen its global trade engagement while strengthening export-led industrial growth across key sectors. Under the FTA, India has secured preferential access across 97 per cent of tariff lines, covering 99.5 per cent of the total trade value. Immediate duty elimination will apply to 70.4 per cent of tariff lines, accounting for 90.7 per cent of India's exports to the EU.

Ghee made with bathroom cleaners used in Tirupati laddu: AP CM

AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, on Friday, claimed that Tirupati laddu was prepared with ghee made with chemicals used for cleaning bathrooms during the previous YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) government's tenure. He accused the YSRCP of trying to tarnish the sanctity of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple by adulterating the 'prasadam' (offering). Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu was addressing a public meeting at Yemmiganur in Kurnool district on the occasion of distribution of 'your land -- your right' pattadar passbooks among farmers.

Jabalpur's student Ayush Tiwari greets PM Modi 'Har Har Narmade'

JABALPUR

Ayush Tiwari, a student from Madhya Pradesh's Jabalpur, interacted with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the annual programme 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' in New Delhi on Friday. Tiwari, a student of class 11 in the state government-run Pandit Lajja Shankar Jha School in Jabalpur, said that he felt lucky to get an opportunity for face-to-face interaction with the Prime Minister. Very few people get the opportunity to meet the Prime Minister and have a face-to-face interaction. I was lucky to get this opportunity. My parents were very happy when I told them that I had been selected for the programme, he said. Sharing his learning from the Pariksha Pe Charcha programme, Tiwari said that they were invited for breakfast at the Prime Minister's residence in Delhi. They thought the PM would arrive after breakfast for a meeting.

FASTag Annual Pass Crosses 50 Lakh Users

FASTag Annual Pass adoption has surged nationwide, crossing 50 lakh users within six months of its launch

NEW DELHI

The government on Friday said the FASTag Annual Pass has crossed the milestone of 50 lakh users, with more than 26.55 crore toll transactions recorded within just six months of its launch. The data reflects the growing popularity of the scheme among private vehicle owners and its role in streamlining toll payments on India's highway network.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, nearly 28 per cent of all car transactions on the National Highway (NH) network are now being carried out through the FASTag Annual Pass.

Officials said this sharp uptake highlights a clear shift toward subscription-based toll payments that reduce the need for frequent recharges and stop-and-go delays at toll plazas.

A region-wise analysis shows that Chandigarh leads the country in Annual Pass usage, accounting for 14 per cent of total transactions under the scheme. It is followed by Tamil Nadu with 12.3 per cent and Delhi at 11.5 per cent, indicating strong adoption in both northern and southern regions.

At the toll-plaza level, Bijwasan Fee Plaza in the Delhi NCR has emerged as the top location for Annual Pass usage, with around 57 per cent of total car crossings there being made using the pass. Mundaka Fee Plaza in Delhi NCR and Jhinjholi Fee Plaza in Sonipat follow closely, each registering about 53 per cent of non-commercial vehicle crossings through the Annual Pass.

The ministry said the FASTag Annual Pass is currently applicable at nearly

1,150 fee plazas across National Highways and National Expressways. It allows users to make unlimited toll payments through a one-time fee of Rs 3,000, valid for either one year or up to 200 toll plaza crossings, whichever is earlier. The facility is available exclusively for non-commercial vehicles equipped with a valid FASTag.

Activation of the Annual Pass is seamless, officials said. Once the one-time payment is made through the Rajmargyatra App or the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) website, the pass is activated on the existing FASTag linked to the vehicle within two hours.

Visiting Polish official praised Narendra Modi's leadership, calling him charismatic and crediting him for transforming India's global standing.

Polish Foreign Affairs Secretary Praises Modi as Phenomenal Leader

NEW DELHI

Visiting Polish Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Wladyslaw Bartoszewski has hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a very charismatic and phenomenal leader, saying India is fortunate to have him at the helm during a period of rapid transformation.

In an exclusive interview with IANS during his visit to New Delhi, Bartoszewski said Prime Minister Modi's ambitious vision has dramatically reshaped India and placed the country firmly on a path of sustained growth. I think the Prime Minister is a phenomenal leader. He is very charismatic, as proven by being elected and re-elected several times. He has changed India dramatically and has a very ambitious vision for the country, he said.

Praising India's economic progress, Bartoszewski noted that the country's rise to become the world's fourth-largest economy reflects the impact of strong and consistent leadership. Today, India is the fourth-largest economy and is moving very fast in the right direction under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I think you are lucky to have such a Prime Minister, he remarked.

Sharing a more personal assessment, the Polish leader said that beyond public perception, Prime Minister Modi leaves a strong impression in private interactions as well. Privately, I can say that he is an absolutely charming, charismatic, and pleasant person. I believe many Indians feel the same way, because they follow his guidance and directions, Bartoszewski said, adding that India's progress has been striking compared to earlier decades. Bartoszewski also highlighted the deepening strategic relationship between India and Poland. Referring to the strategic partnership agreement signed during Prime Minister Modi's visit to Warsaw in 2024, he said bilateral ties continue on an upward trajectory, marked by growing cooperation in political, economic, and strategic domains.

He underlined that Poland views India as a key partner in Asia and sees significant scope for expanding collaboration in trade, technology, defence, and people-to-people exchanges. The strong rapport between the two governments, he said, is reinforced by mutual respect and shared democratic values.

Spa employee sexually assaulted for refusing to pay extortion, three held

THIRUVALLA

A spa employee was allegedly sexually assaulted for refusing to pay money demanded by a gang in Thiruvalla town of Kerala's Pathanamthitta district. The incident occurred at a spa in the Manjadi area on February 1.

According to the complaint, KAAPA Act accused Subin Alexander, popularly known as 'Marana Subin', along with five associates, entered the spa around 3.30 p.m. and asked for extortion money.

When the woman running the establishment refused to comply, the gang allegedly assaulted her and the staff.

A female employee was dragged into an adjacent room, threatened with a knife held to her neck, and subjected to sexual assault, the complaint said.

The accused allegedly forced another customer present at the spa into the room, made him and the establishment owner lie on a bed, and photographed and video-recorded the incident using mobile phones. The visuals were allegedly shot as an act of intimidation.

Madhya Pradesh Considers Incentives for Pulses

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh plans incentives for pulse production as the government pushes farmer income growth and agri-industry expansion. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Friday said the state government is considering incentives for the production of urad (black gram) and masoor (lentil) pulses to encourage farmers and boost agricultural output. The announcement was made while he was addressing a three-day national and international exhibition of advanced machinery related to pulses, grains, and food processing industries in Indore.

Madhya Pradesh plans incentives for pulse production as the government pushes farmer income growth and agri-industry expansion.

The Chief Minister said the government has already prepared a detailed plan and that a formal announcement would be made during an upcoming farmers' conference. Our government is going to announce incentives on moong and urad crops during a Kisan Sammelan soon, Yadav said. He also revealed ambitious plans to raise milk production in the state from the current 9 per cent to 20 per cent over the next five years, underlining a broader push toward strengthening allied agricultural sectors.

Addressing representatives from national and international food processing companies, Yadav said the state is also planning to establish air cargo facilities in the future to support faster and more efficient movement of agricultural and processed food products. Highlighting the state's strategic location, he said Madhya Pradesh lies at the centre of the country and already benefits from strong road and railway connectivity. The government is committed to increasing the income of farmers, but at the same time, we are also ready for full cooperation with industrialists, he said.

The Chief Minister reiterated the state government's focus on farmer welfare, noting that Madhya Pradesh has declared 2026 as the 'Year of Agriculture'. The move signals a strategic policy shift aimed at strengthening farming, dairy, and rural livelihoods, while also promoting value addition through food processing.

Before making the announcements, Yadav inaugurated the exhibition, which showcased state-of-the-art machinery and turnkey plants used in processing pulses, rice, flour, spices, gram flour, wheat, flattened rice (poha), maize, soy, pasta, peanuts, chickpeas, millets, seeds, and other agricultural products. The displays highlighted technological solutions designed to improve efficiency, quality, and profitability across the agri-processing value chain.

Kavitha to launch new political party in 3 months

HYDERABAD

Telangana Jagruthi President K. Kavitha on Friday announced that she will announce a new political party within three months. She told media persons here that she is waiting for a good 'mahuratam' (auspicious time) to launch the political party.

Kavitha, daughter of Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) President and former Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR), quit the BRS last year after she was suspended from it for anti-party activities.

The former MP announced that Telangana Jagruti will organise a meeting in Hyderabad on February 12 to pay tributes to those who laid down their lives for Telangana.

Return to ballot papers reflects anti-technology approach of K'taka govt: Pralhad Joshi

NEW DELHI

Union Minister for Food, Public Distribution and Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi on Friday criticised the Congress-led Karnataka government for opting for ballot papers instead of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in elections, terming the move as an approach that goes against modernity and technology. Speaking to reporters in Delhi, Joshi said the decision of the Congress-led state government to use ballot papers even in local body and gram panchayat elections reflects an attitude opposed to progress. He condemned the move, stating that while the entire country is moving towards modern technology and development, it is unfortunate that the state government is choosing to act against modern practices by reverting to ballot paper-based elections.He pointed out that the introduction of EVMs across the country has helped put a check on electoral malpractices. Despite this, the Congress-led state government is taking such regressive steps merely to please its party high command, he alleged.

It may be noted that the Karnataka government has decided to bring amendments to use ballot papers instead of EVMs in the upcoming local body polls in the state.Minister for Law H.K. Patil had stated, The government has resolved to recommend necessary legal amendments and framing of rules to facilitate the conduct of all upcoming local body elections through ballot papers instead of the EVM system. Earlier, the data from Assembly elections was being used. Now, a decision has been taken to recommend revision, correction, and reconstitution of the voters' list, so that the State Election Commission can prepare a high-quality electoral roll.

MEGHALAYA MULTILEVEL PARKING

Meghalaya Unveils Multi-Pronged Decongestion Plan

SHILLONG

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Friday acknowledged that traffic congestion remains one of the most serious challenges facing Shillong, and said the state government has adopted a long-term, multi-pronged strategy to decongest the city. The approach, he said, begins with the creation of organised and modern parking infrastructure.

Inaugurating Meghalaya's first Automated Multilevel Car Park at Vivekananda Road near the Additional Secretariat, Sangma said unplanned parking and the shortage of designated parking spaces have been major contributors to traffic snarls in the state capital. Among the many challenges Shillong faces, traffic congestion is one of the most pressing. A multi-pronged strategy was therefore developed to slowly and steadily decongest the city, and the multilevel car park we are inaugurating today is just one part of the solution, he said.

The Chief Minister informed that the government has already identified nine additional locations across the city for similar multilevel parking facilities. Once developed, these sites are expected to create parking capacity for around 1,300 vehicles, significantly easing roadside congestion in busy commercial and administrative areas.

Emphasising the importance of organised parking, Sangma said indiscriminate roadside parking severely disrupts traffic flow and causes inconvenience to commuters. To address this, he highlighted the state's new parking policy, which allows private landowners to partner with the government to develop parking facilities.

Under this model, landowners are permitted to collect revenue from the parking spaces, making it a mutually beneficial arrangement.

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POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Actual** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

Sr. No.	Name Of Borrower And Co-Borrower/ Loan Account Number/ Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount	Date of Actual Possession
1	Mohanakumari S, Nagaraja D, Shivanna G N, Deviramma N, **/MLAP0091005115/** Hassan	Property Bearing No. 151600700200200160, Gram Panchayath Property No. 155/222, Totally Measuring 165.92 Square Meters Situated At Gohalli Village, Hallimysuru Gram Panchayath, Holenarasipura Taluk, Hassan District, Karnataka - 573210	21-02-2025 & Rs. 364493/-	30-01-2026

Date: 7th February 2026 | Place: HASSAN **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR.
I.F.T.No:EE/PWD/VJP/PB/2059 building maint/2025-26/4526
Dated:03.02.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(E-Procurement)

The- **Executive Engineer, Public Works Dept. Division, Vijayapur** Invites tenders from eligible tenderers (registered in Public Works Department) Total 1 work, As per standard bid documents KW-3 with 2059-80-053-4-00-200 office building maint, head of account costing of amount for Rs.82.80 Lakhs, the EMD amount of Rs.1,66,000/- for the works. For above work G.S.T amount will be paid to the Contractor separately and Increase in G.S.T shall not be paid in the extended period of Contract for which the contractor alone is responsible for delay as determined by the authority while granting the extension of time. The calendar events of tenders, dates are fixed as follows (1) Last Date for Receipt of Tenders Date-11.02.2026 upto 4.30 PM. (2) Opening of Technical Bid Date-12.02.2026 at 4.31 PM. (3) Opening of Financial Bid Date- 13.02.2026 at 4.31 PM onwords. Clause-4 Conditions of Standard Bid Document may be seen in Departmental Website i.e "https://kppp. karnataka.gov.in" and for more information may contact help desk Bangalore (Phone No. 91 80 46010000, +91 80 68948777) or office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,PWD Division, Vijayapura

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಿಜಯಪುರ/671/ಕೆಎಸ್.ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

QUICK READ

Abandoned Scam Compound in Cambodia

Combodia

Inside a deserted compound in Cambodia, investigators uncovered stark evidence of an industrial-scale fraud operation that appeared to have been abandoned in extreme haste. Papers lay scattered across desks and floors, computers were left behind, and entire rooms had been meticulously designed to resemble police offices from Singapore and Australia, suggesting a sophisticated effort to deceive victims across continents. Among the documents found were detailed personal profiles of individuals from around the world.

Grieving Parents Seek Answers After Teen Dies Bar

Pully

As the parents of 17-year-old Trystan Pidoux prepared to lay their son to rest, they were still searching for answers about how he died in a bar fire at a popular Swiss ski resort. The teenager was among those who lost their lives after a blaze broke out during New Year's Eve celebrations at Le Constellation Bar in Crans-Montana, a luxury destination in the Swiss Alps. In the days following the tragedy, Trystan's parents, Vinciane Stucky and Christian Pidoux, formally requested that prosecutors order an autopsy to determine the precise cause of their son's death. They hoped the procedure would clarify whether he died from smoke inhalation, burns, or other factors linked to the fire, and whether safety failures contributed to the tragedy.

Trump Backs Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi

Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday gave his "total endorsement" to Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi ahead of Japan's national election scheduled for Sunday, injecting international attention into a closely watched political contest. Trump also said he was looking forward to hosting Takaichi at the White House next month, underscoring what both sides describe as a strong and strategic bilateral relationship. Takaichi, Japan's first female prime minister, is widely expected to secure a solid victory for her ruling coalition, according to recent opinion polls.

High-Stakes Iran–U.S. Nuclear Talks Begin Under Omani Mediation

Iran and the United States cautiously reopen indirect nuclear negotiations in Oman, as disputes over scope threaten fragile diplomacy

TEHRAN

Iran and the United States have taken a tentative step toward renewed diplomacy, initiating high-stakes negotiations through Omani mediation aimed at resolving long-standing disagreements over Tehran's nuclear programme. The talks, which began on Friday in the Omani capital Muscat, come at a time of heightened regional instability and carry significant implications for Middle East security.

According to an Iranian official quoted by Reuters, the negotiations had not formally commenced, though Iran's core demands were already conveyed to Washington through Oman. The official indicated that indirect talks could begin after a meeting between the chief U.S. negotiator and Oman's foreign minister, reflecting a familiar "shuttle diplomacy" model used in previous Iran–U.S. engagements. This indirect format underscores the deep mistrust that continues to define relations between Tehran and Washington.

While both sides have publicly signaled a willingness to revive diplomacy over Iran's nuclear activities, sharp differences remain over the scope of the talks. Washington has expressed interest in broadening the agenda beyond the nuclear file to include Iran's ballistic missile programme, its support for armed groups across the region, and domestic human rights concerns. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio recently reiterated that any sustainable agreement must address these wider issues.

Iran, however, has pushed back strongly against such an expansion. An Iranian diplomatic source warned that any involvement of the U.S. military, particularly CENTCOM or regional military officials, could jeopardize the fragile process. Tehran has insisted that the discussions remain strictly focused on nuclear matters, arguing that introducing security and political issues would derail progress.

Iran has proposed that its Foreign Minister, Abbas Araqchi, engage solely on the nuclear dossier with U.S. Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff. The talks are being closely watched internationally, given the risk that failure could escalate tensions and potentially ignite another conflict in the Middle East. Adding another layer of complexity, Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of former U.S. President Donald Trump and a key figure in past Middle East mediation efforts, is also expected to participate in the discussions.

Fighting Intensifies in Eastern Congo, Peace Threatened

Renewed clashes in eastern Congo's highlands are escalating quietly, complicating peace efforts and widening an already volatile conflict.

CONGO

At the general hospital in Fizi, a remote town surrounded by steep highlands in eastern Congo's South Kivu province, nurses rushed to save a wounded soldier's life after he was delivered to the emergency ward on the back of a motorbike. Slumped and bleeding, the soldier had been shot in both legs while fighting on the mountainous front lines north of the town, where violence has surged sharply in recent weeks.

The fighting pits Congo's national army against multiple rebel factions operating in the rugged terrain of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. These clashes, occurring far from major cities and largely outside the spotlight of international diplomacy, are steadily intensifying. According to local and security sources, more fighters and equipment are being deployed by all sides, raising fears that the conflict could spread further across the region.

The violence is unfolding in South Kivu, a region that has long been a flashpoint in Congo's decades-old conflict. However, recent escalations carry broader geopolitical implications. Analysts warn that the renewed fighting risks undermining efforts by the Trump administration to stabilize eastern Congo as part of a strategy aimed at encouraging Western investment in the region's vast mineral resources, including cobalt and lithium.

Earlier this week, the AFC/M23 rebel group cited the clashes in South Kivu as justification for a drone attack on Kisangani airport, located hundreds of kilometres from the active front lines. The group described the strike as retaliation for alleged government aerial bombardments of villages in South Kivu, accusing the army of targeting civilian areas during operations against rebels.

Congo's military has so far not commented publicly on the drone strike or on the rebels' claims that government forces carried out air attacks on villages. The lack of official response has fueled uncertainty and concern among humanitarian groups, who warn that civilians in isolated mountain communities are increasingly vulnerable as fighting intensifies beyond the reach of aid agencies.

Pressure Mounts on Jack Lang Over Epstein Links

PARIS

Political pressure increased on Friday on former French culture minister Jack Lang to step down as president of the Arab World Institute, following revelations about his past association with the late convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The controversy deepened after France's foreign ministry summoned Lang to discuss the matter, signaling growing concern at the highest levels of government.

Lang, a prominent figure in French cultural and political life, acknowledged earlier this week that he had met Epstein around 2012. However, he insisted he was unaware at the time of Epstein's 2008 conviction for sex offences involving a minor in the United States. Lang described Epstein as little more than an acquaintance, portraying him as a wealthy financier with an interest in art and cinema rather than as someone known for criminal behavior.

According to Lang, the introduction was made by U.S. filmmaker Woody Allen, who presented Epstein as a patron of the arts. Lang said their interactions were limited and professional, centered on cultural topics, and denied any close personal relationship. "I had no reason at the time to suspect the criminal background that later became widely known," Lang said in earlier remarks.

The United States urged negotiations on a new nuclear arms treaty after the expiry of limits on U.S.-Russian arsenals

U.S. Calls for New Nuclear Arms Control Treaty After Expiry of New START Pact

WASHINGTON

The United States on Friday called for the negotiation of a new nuclear arms control agreement following the expiration of the landmark New START treaty, which had capped strategic nuclear weapons deployments by Washington and Moscow. The treaty formally expired, ending the last remaining bilateral framework governing the world's two largest nuclear arsenals.

Russia had earlier proposed that both sides voluntarily extend the terms of the agreement for another year to allow time for discussions on a successor treaty. However, U.S. President Donald Trump rejected that approach, saying in a social media post that a completely new agreement was needed rather than a temporary extension of what Washington views as an outdated framework.

Speaking at a Disarmament Conference in Geneva, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Thomas DiNanno said that extending New START would not serve the interests of the United States or global security. He argued that the treaty was flawed and failed to reflect the current strategic environment, particularly because it excluded China, whose nuclear capabilities are expanding.

"Today, the United States faces threats from multiple nuclear powers," DiNanno told delegates. "In short, a bilateral treaty with only one nuclear power is simply inappropriate in 2026 and going forward." His remarks underscored Washington's position that future arms control efforts must be broader in scope and address the realities of a multipolar nuclear world.

New START, which entered into force in 2011, placed limits on deployed strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems held by the United States and Russia. Its expiration marks a significant moment in global arms control, raising concerns among analysts about the potential for an unconstrained nuclear arms race if no successor agreement is reached.

Earlier, DiNanno told reporters that Trump had been unequivocal in his desire for a new nuclear arms treaty, one that would go beyond the bilateral U.S.-Russia framework. Trump has repeatedly argued that China should be included in any future deal, reflecting Washington's growing concern over Beijing's military modernization.

Storm Leonardo Triggers Evacuations in Southern Spain as Flood and Landslide Risks Grow

GRAZALEMA

Authorities in southern Spain evacuated residential areas on Friday amid fears that a major river could overflow following days of relentless rain brought by Storm Leonardo. Emergency officials also warned of landslides caused by bursting underground aquifers, as saturated ground struggled to absorb further rainfall. More than 7,000 people have been forced to leave their homes in the Andalusia region so far, according to regional authorities. The evacuations come as part of a broader emergency response to what meteorologists have described as a "storm train," a sequence of consecutive weather systems that have battered the Iberian Peninsula with torrential rain, strong winds, and widespread disruption over the past several weeks.

Local officials said rivers across southern Spain were approaching critical levels, raising fears of sudden flooding in low-lying towns and rural communities. Civil protection teams moved residents from vulnerable neighborhoods as a precaution, while emergency services monitored dams, reservoirs, and riverbanks around the clock. In some areas, roads were cut off by floodwaters and mudslides, complicating rescue and evacuation efforts.

The prolonged rainfall has also increased the risk of landslides, particularly in hilly and mountainous zones. Authorities warned that underground aquifers, swollen beyond capacity, could suddenly burst to the surface, destabilizing soil and triggering collapses.

'Leave Iran now': US issues warning ahead of nuclear talks in Oman

WASHINGTON

Amid rising tension between Washington and Tehran, the United States has warned its citizens in Iran to "immediately" leave the West Asian country. The advisory, issued by the Virtual US Embassy in Iran, told American nationals to prepare a departure plan that does not rely on US government help, as unrest and travel disruptions persist across the nation. The United States and its archrival Iran have been at daggers drawn since the 1979 Islamic Revolution and embassy hostage crisis in Tehran. However, tensions have escalated since US President Donald Trump threatened to strike Iran in response to its bloody crackdown on the massive protest movement, which began in late December 2025. Trump has sent what he describes as an "armada" to the Gulf, which includes the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and its escort. The so-called armada has been stationed in the region since late January.

New US Advisory

The US advisory told Americans to "leave Iran now. Have a plan for departing Iran that does not rely on US government help." "Leave Iran Now": US' Urgent Warning To Americans Amid Trump's Attack ThreatTensions have escalated since US President Donald Trump threatened to strike Iran in response to its bloody crackdown on the massive protest movement, which began in late December 2025.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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4			8	1		9		3

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8	6	4	3	2	7	9	1	5
3	7	8	6	4	2	1	5	9
2	5	9	1	8	3	6	7	4
6	4	1	7	5	9	3	2	8

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

RUSSIAN GENERAL SHOT

Senior Russian Military Intelligence Officer Shot

MOSCOW

A top Russian military intelligence official was shot inside his Moscow apartment building on Friday and rushed to hospital, investigators said, marking the latest in a string of apparent assassination attempts linked to Russia's war in Ukraine. The victim, Lieutenant General Vladimir Alexeyev, serves as deputy head of the GRU, Russia's powerful military intelligence agency.

According to Russian investigators, an unidentified gunman fired several shots at Alexeyev before fleeing the scene. The shooting occurred as Alexeyev was leaving his apartment building to head to work, suggesting the attacker may have been waiting for him. The general, 64, was transported to hospital in serious condition, with early reports indicating multiple gunshot wounds.

Alexeyev's senior role within the GRU means he would have been closely involved in planning and overseeing aspects of Russia's military campaign in Ukraine. Since the full-scale invasion began in 2022, Moscow has faced a series of targeted attacks on military figures, intelligence officers, and pro-war figures, particularly in Russian cities far from the battlefield.

The Russian newspaper Kommersant, citing law enforcement sources, reported that Alexeyev sustained gunshot wounds to his arm, leg, and chest during what appeared to be a struggle with the assailant. Investigators have not released details on the suspect's identity or possible motives, and security services have launched a manhunt.

Alexeyev's work has previously been recognised at the highest level. He was awarded the title of Hero of Russia by President Vladimir Putin, an honour reflecting his prominence within the country's military and intelligence establishment. The attack on such a high-ranking figure is likely to heighten concerns within Russia's security services about vulnerabilities even in heavily guarded urban areas.

There was no immediate comment from Ukrainian officials. However, since the start of the war, Ukrainian military intelligence has openly claimed responsibility for the killing of several senior Russian officers. Some of those targeted had appeared on publicly circulated lists of individuals described by Kyiv as enemies of Ukraine.

Friday's shooting underscores the shadow war running parallel to the conflict in Ukraine, in which intelligence services, covert operations, and targeted killings play an increasingly visible role.

Centre's Borrowing Manageable: RBI Governor

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra says lower govt borrowing will efficiently support economic stability

MUMBAI

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Friday that the central government's borrowing programme for the coming financial year is on the lower side, which should allow it to mobilise resources at reasonable prices without putting undue pressure on financial markets. His remarks came during the post-monetary policy press conference, where he sought to reassure investors about debt sustainability and liquidity conditions.

29th Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)
Chaired by
Hon'ble Union Finance Minister
Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman
Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs

Malhotra stressed that market participants should focus more on the government's net borrowing requirement rather than headline gross borrowing figures. It may not be right to look at the gross borrowing number alone, he said, explaining that higher redemptions expected in FY27 would naturally push up gross borrowing. Net borrowings, however, are only at Rs 11.73 lakh crore, which is about Rs 20,000 crore more than last year. Given the size of the Budget, one would have expected a much bigger increase, he observed.

According to the governor, the relatively modest rise in net borrowings reflects fiscal discipline and should help keep bond yields in check. He added that the government plans to supplement its borrowing programme through the issuance of Treasury Bills, which would provide authorities with greater flexibility in managing cash flows and smoothing the yield curve.

The issuance of Treasury Bills in the next financial year will help further manage the yield curve better, Malhotra said. He also noted that the budgeted numbers for small savings schemes appear conservative, reinforcing the view that the Centre's overall borrowing burden remains manageable. The Centre's borrowing programme is on the lower side and can raise funds at reasonable prices, he added.

RBI Proposes Allowing Bank Lending to REITs

MUMBAI

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra announced reforms to boost credit flow to REITs and ease expansion norms for NBFCs.

Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday said the central bank proposes to allow commercial banks to extend finance to Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), marking a significant shift in India's financial and real estate funding landscape. The move, he said, will be subject to appropriate prudential safeguards and reflects the growing maturity of the regulatory framework governing listed REITs.

Malhotra explained that REITs and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) were originally conceptualised in India to help free up banks' capital locked in completed and operational real estate and infrastructure projects. These trusts were designed to refinance such assets using pooled funds from institutional and retail investors, reducing direct exposure of banks. In line with that objective, commercial banks were initially barred from lending to both REITs and InvITs.

While bank lending to InvITs was permitted at a later stage, lending to REITs remained prohibited until now. Upon review, and considering the presence of a strong regulatory and governance framework for listed REITs, it is proposed to permit commercial banks to extend finance to REITs, subject to appropriate prudential safeguards, Malhotra said.

He added that existing guidelines for lending to InvITs will also be harmonised to ensure parity with the prudential safeguards proposed for REITs. Draft directions outlining the revised framework will be issued shortly for public consultation, allowing stakeholders to provide feedback before the rules are finalised. Market participants expect the move to broaden funding options for REITs and deepen India's listed real estate market.

In a separate announcement, Malhotra said the Reserve Bank of India also proposes to dispense with the requirement of prior approval for opening branches in the case of NBFCs-Investment and Credit Companies (ICCs) engaged in lending against gold collateral. Currently, such NBFCs with more than 1,000 branches are required to seek RBI approval before opening new outlets.

In view of the comprehensive prudential and governance framework applicable to NBFC-ICCs, it is proposed to dispense with the requirement of prior approval for opening branches by such NBFCs, the governor said.

QUICK READ

Union Budget Sets Growth Vision Till 2047: Jeet Adani

Nagpur

The Union government's policies have been very progressive, and the Budget 2026-27 lays a clear roadmap for India's growth through 2047, said Jeet Adani, Director of Adani Defence & Aerospace, on Friday. Speaking to reporters at the sidelines of 'Advantage Vidarbha 2026' – a business conclave and investment summit – he described the Union Budget 2026-27 as highly positive and forward-looking.

Adani highlighted that the budget prepares Indian industries for sustained growth by focusing on investment, infrastructure, and innovation. He emphasized that policies supporting energy, manufacturing, and logistics will create long-term opportunities for businesses and communities. According to him, such measures will strengthen India's economic foundations and reinforce confidence in the country's industrial and developmental trajectory.

Audi India opens second showroom in Hyderabad

Hyderabad

German luxury car manufacturer Audi on Friday announced a significant expansion of its retail footprint in India with the inauguration of a "first-of-its-kind" showroom here. The state-of-the-art facility, Audi's second in the city, reinforces the brand's commitment to the fast-growing and progressive Hyderabad market, a press release said.

Designed around Audi's Global Progressive Showroom Concept, the showroom reflects the brand's ethos of placing people, technology, and sustainability at the centre of the retail experience, it added.

India's proposed Bharat Container Shipping Line seeks to reduce foreign reliance, strengthen logistics, and generate jobs, a report said

Bharat Container Shipping Line Targets Foreign Dependence, Jobs, Trade

MUMBAI

The government's push to establish a new domestic container shipping line, Bharat Container Shipping Line (BCSL), is aimed at reducing India's dependence on foreign carriers while stimulating job creation and economic growth, according to a new report. The initiative is expected to form a central pillar of India's long-term import and export logistics strategy.

According to a report published by The Maritime Executive, the government earlier this week oversaw the formal signing of agreements outlining the roadmap for BCSL. As part of the initial rollout, the government plans to order 15 domestically built container ships during FY 2026–27, marking a significant boost for India's shipbuilding sector.

The report said Phase 1 of the project envisions the deployment of 51 vessels over the next five years. In its initial stage, BCSL services are expected to focus on Asia,

West Asia, and the Red Sea region, before expanding operations to Europe, Africa, and the Americas. This phased expansion is designed to gradually position India as a stronger player in global container shipping.

Officials cited in the report said the government is prepared to invest nearly $6.5 billion in launching the shipping line. It will become the backbone of India's import and export logistics strategy, the report quoted officials as saying, underlining the scale and strategic importance of the project.

The memorandum of understanding for BCSL was signed by several key state-run and port entities, including Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority, VO Chidambaranar Port Authority, Chennai Port Authority, and Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited.

The report also noted that recent changes to cabotage rules have already encouraged global shipping majors such as CMA CGM, Maersk, and MSC Mediterranean Shipping to reflag vessels in India, reflecting growing confidence in the country's maritime policy framework.

Beyond shipping, the government plans to develop a domestic container manufacturing ecosystem capable of producing one million TEUs annually. A $1 billion container manufacturing assistance scheme has been outlined for the next five years. Additionally, $1.6 billion has been allocated for port capacity expansion projects, including a major outer harbour development by the VO Chidambaranar Port Authority.

Adani Powers Vidarbha's Energy, Industrial Growth

NAGPUR

Jeet Adani, Director of Adani Defence and Aerospace, said Vidarbha is central to India's energy story, with the Adani Group's presence being generational. At 'Advantage Vidarbha 2026', he highlighted Maharashtra's 3,300 MW Tiroda power plant, the revived 600 MW Butibori plant, and a 25-year 6,600 MW electricity supply deal. A Rs 70,000 crore coal gasification complex at Linga will create 30,000 jobs and boost chemical manufacturing. Adani is also strengthening logistics with a 75-acre ICD at Borkhedi and 24 border check posts, enhancing exports, competitiveness, and Vidarbha's industrial role.

RBI's rate decision reflects favourable assessment of India's growth: Economists

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to keep the policy rate unchanged reflected a favourable assessment of growth and inflation dynamics, economists said on Friday. The RBI MPC, in its first monetary policy review of 2026, kept the repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent.

Analysts welcomed the pause on rate hikes and said they expect the RBI to maintain an extended pause, due to positive cyclical upswing and confidence from successful conclusion of multiple trade deals.

Radhika Rao, Executive Director and Senior Economist at DBS Bank, said the decision was anchored in a favourable macroeconomic outlook, and planned revision to the CPI and GDP series later this month.

Rao noted the governor's cues about factors behind the recent uptick in bond yields,

adding that the central appeared ready to act pre emptively if needed. Looking beyond February, we expect the RBI to maintain an extended pause, supported by a positive cyclical upswing and confidence effects stemming from the successful conclusion of US trade negotiations, she said.

Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda said that despite the RBI's assurance on liquidity, no specific measures were announced indicating need-based interventions.

Sabnavis highlighted the central bank's recent move to raise the collateral free loan limit to Rs 20 lakh as a follow up to Budget measures for MSMEs.

We expect that the rate cycle has ended and 5.25 per cent repo rate will be maintained for some time, and the next move is more likely in upward direction if inflation turns out to be higher in future, Sabnavis said.

The RBI's rate pause gave much-needed stability to the real estate sector at a time when growth expectations have strengthened following the Union Budget's thrust on higher government spending, added Prashant Sharma, President, NAREDCO Maharashtra.

Rajani Sinha, Chief Economist, CareEdge Ratings, estimated that the recently proposed tariff reductions from the India-US trade deal could add roughly 20 basis points to GDP growth. The ratings agency raised its FY27 growth projection to about 7.2 per cent, with CPI inflation estimates averaging close to 4 per cent.

Railway Tunnel to Boost Northeast Connectivity: Assam CM

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday welcomed the proposed underground railway tunnel through the Siliguri Corridor, describing it as a game-changing initiative that would further strengthen connectivity between the Northeast and the rest of the country while ensuring uninterrupted movement of passengers and goods.

In a post on the social media platform X, CM Sarma said the ambitious project would cement India's strategic and economic links with the Northeast, a region long dependent on the narrow Siliguri Corridor, often referred to as the Chicken's Neck, for surface connectivity. Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Chief Minister said the visionary proposal reflected the Centre's long-term commitment to national integration and balanced regional development.

The proposed underground railway tunnel through the Siliguri corridor will further cement connectivity to the North East region and provide an uninterrupted link for the movement of passengers and goods. Gratitude to Adarniya @narendramodi ji for envisaging this game-changing idea, CM Sarma posted.

The Chief Minister has on several occasions highlighted the strategic vulnerability of the Siliguri Corridor, a narrow stretch of land connecting the Northeast with mainland India.

He has described it as not only a logistical lifeline but also a sensitive national security zone, stressing the need for multiple, resilient connectivity options to safeguard economic activity and mobility in the region.

He has earlier pointed out that dependence on a single surface corridor poses risks during natural disasters, accidents or other disruptions, which can effectively cut off the Northeast.

He has advocated for alternative routes and advanced infrastructure solutions, including tunnels and enhanced rail and road networks, to ensure seamless access at all times.

Officials said the proposed underground railway tunnel would significantly reduce such vulnerabilities by providing a protected, all-weather route through the Siliguri Corridor.

Pakistan's aim to reach $100 bn exports by 2030

NEW DELHI

A recent report highlights that the gap between Pakistan's official governance and actual living conditions is undermining productivity, deepening inequality, and weakening growth. Ambitious goals, such as achieving $100 billion in exports by 2030, are closer to wishful thinking than credible strategy. While the government's latest incentive package may offer temporary relief, it cannot significantly alter the export trajectory without deep structural reforms.

Projections place Pakistan's total exports at roughly $40–41 billion in FY2025–26, with merchandise exports around $32 billion and services $8–9 billion. Performance so far is weak: merchandise exports from July 2025 to January 2026 fell 7% year-on-year to $18.2 billion, widening the trade deficit by 28.2%.

Structural transformation in productivity, urban infrastructure, industrial clustering, and competitiveness is essential. Only 38–39% of the population is officially urban, though many densely populated areas function as cities, absorbing migrants and shaping labor markets. Without reform, Pakistan's export ambitions remain more a sandcastle than a strategy.

India-EU FTA Enhances Indian Auto Component Access

MUMBAI

The India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) is expected to significantly enhance access and price competitiveness for Indian auto components in European markets. By reducing tariffs and streamlining trade regulations, the agreement aims to make Indian products more attractive to European buyers, supporting export growth and strengthening India's position in the global automotive supply chain.

For Indian manufacturers, this creates opportunities to scale production, diversify markets, and improve cost efficiency, particularly in segments where European demand is growing. Simultaneously, Indian companies may face higher quality and compliance standards, pushing them to adopt advanced manufacturing practices.

Overall, the FTA is a strategic move to boost India's automotive exports, enhance competitiveness, and foster deeper economic engagement with the European Union, benefiting both industry stakeholders and the broader economy.

INDIA AUSTRALIA TRADE

India-Australia Case Studies Highlight Trade Pact Impact

NEW DELHI

The India–Australia business case studies demonstrate how the bilateral trade agreement has translated into tangible opportunities for companies, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal said on Friday. He described the initiative as evidence-based and reflective of how businesses are actively using the agreement to expand operations and accelerate growth across both markets.

The India–Australia Business Case Studies Compendium, jointly developed by the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) and Newland Global Group, is titled Pitch Perfect Australia-India: Perfect Conditions for a $100

Billion Partnership. According to the Commerce Ministry, the publication documents real-world business journeys of 30 organisations operating across India and Australia, highlighting market-entry experiences, growth strategies, and practical lessons learned.

Agrawal praised IIFT for anchoring the initiative and underlined its relevance for policymakers, industry leaders, and academic stakeholders. He said the compendium would play an important role in strengthening and enhancing the gains of the India–Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which came into force to deepen economic integration between the two countries.

Australian High Commissioner to India Philip Green also welcomed the initiative, noting that platforms bringing together academia, government, and industry are essential for sustaining the strong strategic relationship between India and Australia. He acknowledged IIFT's role in fostering informed dialogue on bilateral trade and investment.

Joint Secretary Petal Dhillon highlighted the growing momentum in India–Australia economic relations, stating that IIFT has played a crucial role in generating research-driven insights and facilitating dialogue that supports better utilisation of ECTA.

Professor Rakesh Mohan Joshi, Vice Chancellor of IIFT, emphasised the importance of documenting real business journeys and transforming them into learning resources for both industry and academia. He said collaborations such as this reflect IIFT's commitment to bridging research and practice and supporting India's expanding footprint in global trade.

THE MARVEL OF STEEL AND AMBITION: INDIA'S AMAZING RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

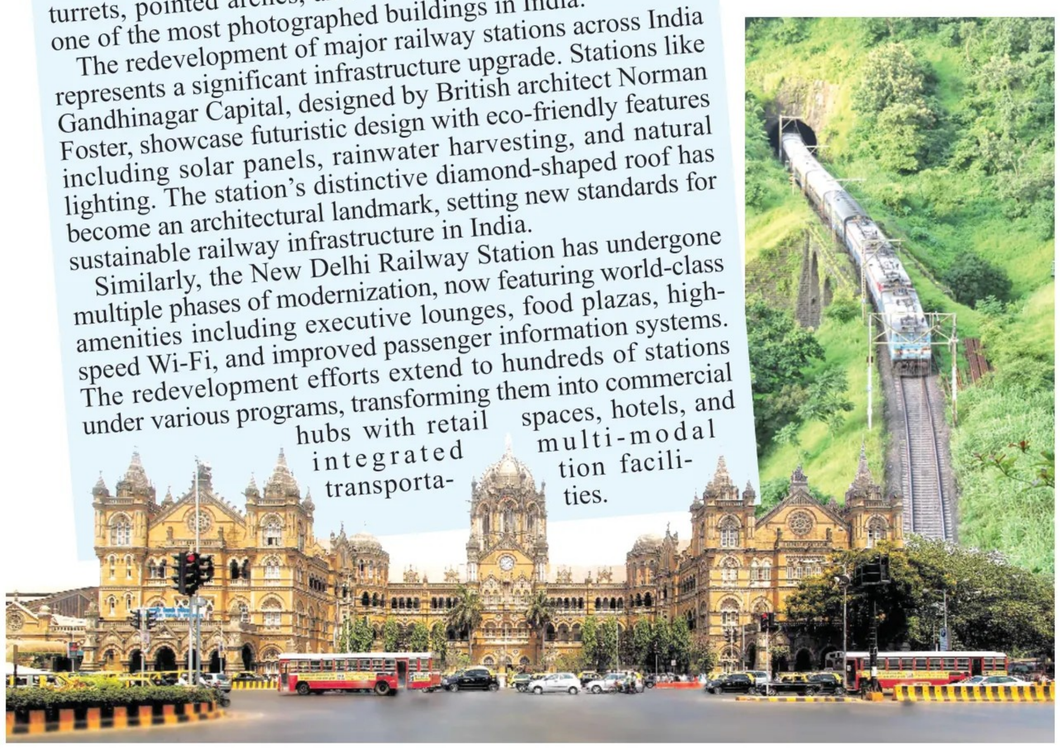
When the first train chugged out of Mumbai's Bori Bunder station on April 16, 1853, covering the 34-kilometer stretch to Thane, few could have imagined that this modest beginning would evolve into one of the world's largest and most complex railway networks. Today, the Indian Railways stands as a testament to engineering excellence, administrative prowess, and the indomitable spirit of a nation that moves on rails. Spanning over 68,000 route kilometers and employing more than 1.2 million people, Indian Railways is not just a transportation system—it's the circulatory system of the world's most populous democracy. Every day, approximately 13,000 passenger trains transport nearly 23 million passengers across the country, while 9,000 freight trains carry the lifeblood of India's economy. This vast network connects the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas to the sun-kissed beaches of Kerala, the deserts of Rajasthan to the tea gardens of Assam, making it an engineering marvel that deserves deep appreciation.

Station Architecture: Where Heritage Meets Modernity

Indian railway stations range from modest village stops to grand architectural statements that rival international airports in their facilities and aesthetics. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in Mumbai, formerly known as Victoria Terminus, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and represents the finest example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture blended with traditional Indian elements. Its stone domes, turrets, pointed arches, and eccentric ground plan make it one of the most photographed buildings in India.

The redevelopment of major railway stations across India represents a significant infrastructure upgrade. Stations like Gandhinagar Capital, designed by British architect Norman Foster, showcase futuristic design with eco-friendly features including solar panels, rainwater harvesting, and natural lighting. The station's distinctive diamond-shaped roof has become an architectural landmark, setting new standards for sustainable railway infrastructure in India.

Similarly, the New Delhi Railway Station has undergone multiple phases of modernization, now featuring world-class amenities including executive lounges, food plazas, high-speed Wi-Fi, and improved passenger information systems. The redevelopment efforts extend to hundreds of stations under various programs, transforming them into commercial hubs with retail spaces, hotels, and integrated multi-modal transportation facilities.



Architectural Masterpieces on Rails

The infrastructure of Indian Railways encompasses some of the most breathtaking and technically challenging railway constructions in the world. The Chenab Bridge in Jammu and Kashmir, when completed, will stand as the world's highest railway bridge at 359 meters above the riverbed—taller than the Eiffel Tower. This architectural wonder, part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project, represents the pinnacle of Indian engineering capability. Designed to withstand high wind speeds, extreme temperatures, and seismic activity in one of the most geologically sensitive zones on Earth, the bridge required innovations in construction technology and materials science.

The Pamban Bridge connecting Rameswaram to mainland India is another engineering gem. Built in 1914, this cantilever bridge features a double-leaf bascule section that can be raised to allow ships to pass through. Standing amid the harsh saline environment of the Bay of Bengal, this bridge has withstood countless cyclones and continues to serve as a vital link, though a new parallel bridge is now under construction to complement it.

Mountain railways hold a special place in India's railway heritage. The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway, and the Kalka-Shimla Railway are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, recognized for their outstanding universal value. These narrow-gauge railways, built during the British colonial era, demonstrate remarkable engineering solutions to overcome steep gradients and challenging terrain. The Nilgiri Mountain Railway, for instance, uses a unique rack and pinion system to climb gradients as steep as 1 in 12.5, offering passengers spectacular views of lush valleys and mist-covered mountains.

Sustainability Initiatives: Greening the Rails

Indian Railways has emerged as a global leader in sustainable transportation infrastructure. The ambitious goal to become a net-zero carbon emitter by 2030 has driven numerous green initiatives across the network. Massive solar power installations on station rooftops, along railway tracks, and on unused railway land contribute significantly to the energy requirements of the network.

Bio-toilets in trains have replaced conventional discharge systems, preventing human waste from being discharged onto tracks. Over 2.8 lakh bio-toilets have been installed across the fleet, making Indian Railways one of the largest implementers of this eco-friendly technology. These toilets use anaerobic bacteria to decompose human waste, with the effluent being released onto tracks only after complete sanitization.

Water conservation through rainwater harvesting, sewage treatment plants at major stations, and the use of treated water for horticulture and maintenance activities demonstrate the railways' commitment to environmental stewardship. The extensive tree plantation drives along railway lines create green corridors while preventing soil erosion.

Safety and Signaling: Protecting Lives on the Tracks

Safety remains paramount in operating a network of this magnitude. Indian Railways has invested heavily in modern signaling and telecommunications systems to prevent accidents and ensure smooth operations.

The implementation of the Train Protection and Warning System (TPWS) and the more advanced Train Collision Avoidance System (TCAS), now known as Kavach, represents a major leap in railway safety technology.

Kavach, an indigenous Automatic Train Protection system, uses a combination of GPS, Radio Frequency Identification, and other technologies to automatically apply brakes if trains violate signal warnings or speed limits. This system, being gradually rolled out across the network, can prevent head-on collisions and rear-end collisions, two of the most serious types of railway accidents.

The elimination of unmanned level crossings has been another major safety initiative. Through a combination of constructing road over-bridges, road under-bridges, and subways, along with the provision of manned crossings, Indian Railways has systematically addressed this safety concern across the network.

Challenges and the Road Ahead

Despite its impressive scale and achievements, Indian Railways faces significant challenges. The aging infrastructure in certain sections requires urgent upgrades. The demand for passenger services far exceeds the current capacity during peak seasons, necessitating substantial investment in additional tracks and coaches. The safety record, while improving, still requires sustained focus and investment in modern technologies.

The future of Indian Railways looks toward high-speed rail with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Corridor, being developed with Japanese assistance, marking India's first true bullet train project. This 508-kilometer corridor will operate trains at speeds up to 320 kilometers per hour, reducing travel time between the two cities to about two hours.

The integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning for predictive maintenance, operations optimization, and passenger services promises to make the railways more efficient and customer-friendly. Smart stations equipped with IoT sensors, facial recognition for security, and advanced passenger information systems are being developed as prototypes.

Technological Leaps: From Steam to Semi-High Speed

The technological evolution of Indian Railways reflects the nation's journey toward modernization. The transition from steam locomotives to diesel and electric traction has been nearly complete, with electrification now covering over 85% of the broad-gauge network. This massive electrification drive, one of the largest in the world, reduces dependency on imported diesel, lowers carbon emissions, and improves operational efficiency.

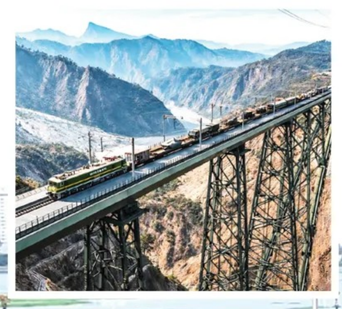
The introduction of Vande Bharat Express trains marks India's entry into the semi-high-speed railway era. These indigenous, train-set-based trainsets manufactured under the Make in India initiative can achieve speeds up to 180 kilometers per hour. With features like automatic doors, GPS-based passenger information systems, onboard Wi-Fi, bio-vacuum toilets, and rotating seats, these trains offer an experience comparable to international standards while being designed specifically for Indian conditions.

The dedicated freight corridors under construction—the Eastern and Western Dedicated Freight Corridors—represent transformative infrastructure projects. These corridors will allow freight trains to run at speeds up to 100 kilometers per hour, carrying double-stacked containers, significantly improving the logistics efficiency of Indian industry. The Western Corridor alone spans 1,504 kilometers from Dadri near Delhi to Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai, incorporating state-of-the-art technologies including automated train operations and advanced signaling systems.

Economic Engine: Moving the Nation Forward

The railway infrastructure serves as the backbone of India's economy, moving essential commodities including coal, steel, cement, food grains, and petroleum products across vast distances. The freight tariffs of railways remain significantly lower than road transport, making it the preferred mode for bulk cargo movement. The modernization of freight infrastructure, including the construction of multi-modal logistics parks and container terminals, has improved the competitiveness of Indian Railways in the logistics sector.

The railway network also acts as a major employer and creates numerous indirect employment opportunities. From vendors at railway stations to the supply chain for railway equipment and maintenance, the railways support the livelihoods of millions of families across India. The railway workshops in places like Chittaranjan, Varanasi, and Perambur manufacture locomotives, coaches, and wheels, serving as industrial hubs.



Conclusion

The railway infrastructure of India stands as a monument to human ambition, engineering excellence, and the power of connectivity. From bridges that defy gravity to trains that race through the countryside, from heritage stations that tell stories of colonial grandeur to modern terminals that glimpse the future—Indian Railways encapsulates the nation's journey and aspirations.

As India continues to invest in modernizing and expanding this vast network, the railways will remain central to the country's development story. The steel tracks that crisscross the nation are more than mere infrastructure; they are threads that weave together the fabric of Indian society, connecting people, cultures, and dreams. In every whistle of a departing train, in every bridge that spans a challenging gorge, and in every station that bustles with life, the amazing railway infrastructure of India continues to write its remarkable story—a story of progress, resilience, and hope.

FIFA reports record 5,973 international transfers in Jan window

Global men's, women's football sees surge in cross-border moves despite reduced spending

ZURICH

FIFA reported a record 5,973 international transfers during the January trading window for men's football, marking a continued rise in cross-border player movement even as overall spending declined from last year's historic high.

According to the FIFA report, the number of international transfers increased by three percent compared to January 2025. These deals involve clubs from different countries and are processed through FIFA's transfer matching system. While activity reached an all-time high, total spending dropped by around 18 percent to $1.95 billion. Despite the decline, the figure still represents a 20 percent increase over the previous January record set in 2023.

The report highlighted contrasting trends in women's football. Clubs spent more than $10 million on international transfers in the women's game, an 85 percent jump from the previous record a year ago. However, the total number of international transfers in women's football fell by six percent to 420, indicating fewer but significantly higher-value deals.

FIFA clarified that the research covers only international transfers and does not include domestic moves between clubs within the same country.

England once again led global spending in men's football, with clubs shelling out $363 million on transfer fees. Italian clubs ranked second with $283 million, followed by Brazil, Germany and France. Despite heavy spending, English clubs recouped just $150 million from outgoing international transfers.

French clubs emerged as the biggest beneficiaries in terms of sales, earning $218 million, ahead of Italy, Brazil, England and Spain. In the United States, clubs spent $99 million on international signings and earned $48 million from player sales abroad.

English clubs also dominated the women's transfer market, topping both spending and earnings with outlays of over $5 million.

FIFA said the figures reflect the growing globalisation of football, with clubs continuing to prioritise international recruitment even amid financial caution. The trends suggest sustained confidence in the transfer market, particularly in the women's game, where investment continues to rise sharply.

Lookman scores on debut as Atletico cruise into Copa semis

Lookman shines on debut as Atletico thrash Betis to book semifinal spot.

MADRID

Ademola Lookman marked a dream debut for Atletico Madrid by scoring his first goal in a dominant 5-0 win over Real Betis, as Diego Simeone's side marched into the semifinals of the Copa del Rey for the third consecutive season.

The Nigeria international, signed from Atalanta late in the winter transfer window, needed just one start to make an impact, capping a blistering first-half performance by Atletico at the Benito Villamarín. Goals from David Hancko, Giuliano Simeone, Lookman, Antoine Griezmann and Thiago Almada sealed an emphatic victory and underlined Atletico's growing momentum in domestic competitions.

Hancko opened the scoring in the 12th minute with a composed finish, before Giuliano Simeone doubled the lead in the 30th. Lookman then announced himself in style seven minutes later, latching onto a swift counter-attack and calmly finishing to make it 3-0.

"I'm very, very happy and very proud to make my debut tonight," Lookman said after the match. "It was a special performance from the team. Everyone welcomed me warmly, which made it easy to settle in, especially after only a couple of training sessions."

Atletico continued to dominate after the break, with Griezmann netting the fourth goal in the 62nd minute, assisted by Lookman, who capped an impressive all-round display. Almada completed the rout in the 83rd minute.

Coach Diego Simeone praised the new signing's contribution. "He came to help us, and hopefully we can help him improve. He has different qualities from the players we already have, and that will make us stronger," Simeone said. Mexico midfielder Obed Vargas also made his Atletico debut, coming on late alongside another winter signing, Rodri Mendoza.

Atletico will discover their semifinal opponent on Friday, with Barcelona, Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad also in the last four. Simeone's side will be aiming to reach their first Copa del Rey final since lifting the trophy in the 2012-13 season. The two teams meet again on Sunday in La Liga, where Atletico sit third, with Betis fifth but trailing by 10 points.

Four-star Kerala demolishes Punjab, sets up summit clash with Services

SILAPATHAR

Seven-time champion Kerala produced a commanding all-round performance to thrash a 10-man Punjab 4-0 in the semifinals of the 79th Santosh Trophy National Football Championship at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, booking a title clash with Services.

Kerala, dominant from the outset, seized control early and never allowed Punjab a foothold in the contest. Muhammed Ajsal opened the scoring in the 16th minute, rising at the far post to head in M.M. Arjun's well-flighted corner-kick. The early breakthrough set the tone for Kerala's aggressive approach, built around swift movement and effective use of set-pieces.

P.T. Muhammed Riyas doubled the advantage in the 34th minute, again capitalising on a corner. After Arjun played a short delivery, Bibin Ajayan slipped the ball into the box for an unmarked Riyas, who made no mistake from close range. Kerala continued to press, and their dominance was rewarded just before the interval when M. Viknesh pounced on a defensive lapse to slot home the third goal at the stroke of half-time.Punjab's troubles deepened in the 72nd minute when Harjit was shown a red card for a second bookable offence, effectively ending any hopes of a comeback. With the numerical advantage, Kerala controlled possession and tempo, and Riyas completed his brace in the 83rd minute, finishing clinically off Ajsal's assist to seal an emphatic victory. In the earlier semifinal, Services advanced to their 13th Santosh Trophy final after defeating Railways 2-0 at the same venue. Abhishek Pawar starred for Services, scoring once in each half. He opened the scoring with a fine volley in the 32nd minute and later converted a penalty in the 73rd after Zaheer Khan was fouled inside the box.

Bundesliga title race flickers as Dortmund close in on Bayern

BERLIN

In the space of just two match days, Borussia Dortmund have breathed fresh life into a Bundesliga title race that once appeared all but settled. Bayern Munich's commanding lead at the top has been cut by five points, leaving Dortmund six adrift and sensing an unlikely opening after months of Bavarian dominance.

Bayern's shock 2-1 home defeat to Augsburg — their first league loss in 10 months — followed by a hard-earned draw away to Hamburg, has stalled a campaign that began at a historic pace. After producing the best opening half-season in Bundesliga history, Bayern had seemed destined for another routine crown. Instead, Niko Kovac's Dortmund have edged closer, quietly applying pressure.

Dortmund travel to a struggling Wolfsburg, a day before Bayern host in-form Hoffenheim.

A Dortmund win would temporarily reduce the gap to just three points, cranking up the tension ahead of a pivotal period in the season. Dortmund's tally of 45 points from 20 games is their best at this stage since the 2018-19 campaign.

The stakes will rise further when Dortmund host Bayern in late February, a fixture now carrying genuine title implications. Kovac, however, remains cautious. "We can determine our own fate by ensuring the others don't catch us. We can't determine the fate of others," he said. "We're six points behind and we play Bayern Munich only once."

Dortmund's only league defeat came at Bayern earlier this season, a narrow 2-1 loss in which they created enough chances to claim a result. Yet game management has hurt them. They have dropped 10 points from winning positions in the final 20 minutes, including recent scares against Heidenheim and St Pauli.

Meanwhile, Bayern face a stern test from third-placed Hoffenheim, last season's relegation candidates who have won 11 of their past 14 league games. Midfielder Grischa Prömel has been central to their rise, contributing six goals and two assists in an ever-present campaign.

With momentum subtly shifting, the Bundesliga's long-dormant title intrigue may finally be stirring.

PSG brace for tough run as 'strange' Marseille come to town

PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain coach Luis Enrique has warned that his side faces a demanding finish to the Ligue 1 season, beginning with Sunday's high-voltage clash against unpredictable arch-rivals Marseille at the Parc des Princes.

European champions PSG arrive on the back of six straight league wins but are far from comfortable leaders. A resurgent Lens sit just two points behind, having also reached the French Cup quarterfinals, keeping the title race alive far longer than expected. "It's a very hard league," Luis Enrique said after last week's dramatic 2-1 win at Strasbourg, where PSG struck late despite being reduced to 10 men following Achraf Hakimi's red card.

"Lens deserve to be up there with us. Marseille and Lyon are improving as well. It's going to be a tough end to the season," the Spaniard added.

PSG have enjoyed a rare free midweek following their surprise domestic cup exit, but a gruelling schedule looms. Later this month, they face a two-legged Champions League playoff against Monaco with a place in the round of 16 at stake.

Marseille arrive in Paris amid turbulence. Roberto De Zerbi's side were knocked out of Europe in chaotic fashion and faced fierce supporter backlash, despite responding with a convincing 3-0 French Cup win over Rennes. Banners unfurled by fans reflected lingering anger over recent failures, prompting talks between club officials, players and supporter groups.

"It's a strange team, hard to figure out," De Zerbi admitted. "We're looking for continuity and consistency." Marseille beat PSG 1-0 in September and pushed them to penalties in the Champions Trophy last month after a stoppage-time equaliser forced a 2-2 draw.

PSG will miss the suspended Hakimi, while winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia remains an injury doubt. Even so, De Zerbi knows the challenge ahead. "PSG are the strongest team in Europe," he said. "I really believe it."

With form, rivalry and pressure colliding, Sunday's Klassiker promises another tense chapter in French football's fiercest feud.

Hockey India Names 24-Member Squad for Pro League

NEW DELHI

Hockey India announced a 24-member Indian men's squad for the upcoming home leg of the FIH Pro League, marking the team's first major international assignment of the season and offering opportunities to several promising youngsters.

The Rourkela leg of the Pro League will be held from February 10 to 15, with Argentina and Belgium set to tour India for the fixtures. The selection reflects a blend of experience and youth as the team management looks to build depth ahead of a demanding international calendar.

Goalkeeper Pawan Malik has been handed an opportunity alongside Suraj Karkera, underlining the selectors' intent to widen options between the posts. One of the standout inclusions is defender and drag-flick specialist Amandeep Lakra, who earned a call-up after a stellar performance in the recently concluded Hockey India League. Lakra was adjudged Player of the Tournament, impressing with his composure in defence and consistency on penalty corners.

The squad also features two members from India's bronze medal-winning junior team at the recent Junior World Cup. Twenty-one-year-old Rosan Kujur has received his maiden senior national call-up, while Manmeet Singh has also been rewarded for his performances at the junior level.

Experienced names such as captain Harmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Hardik Singh, and Mandeep Singh provide stability and leadership, while the forward line sees a mix of proven performers and emerging attackers as India looks to maintain its attacking intent against strong opposition.

The Pro League matches in Rourkela will be crucial for India, offering valuable ranking points and high-quality competition against two of the world's top teams.

GOALKEEPERS
- Suraj Karkera
- Pawan Malik

DEFENDERS
- Amit Rohidas
- Jarmanpreet Singh
- Jugraj Singh
- Harmanpreet Singh
- Sumit
- Sanjay
- Nilam Sanjeep Xess
- Amandeep Lakra

MIDFIELDERS
- Rajinder Singh
- Manmeet Singh
- Vivek Sagar Prasad
- Hardik Singh
- Moirangthem Singh
- Nilakanta Sharma
- Rosan Kujur

FORWARDS
- Abhishek
- Sukhjeet Singh
- Shilanand Lakra
- Selvam Karthi
- Mandeep Singh
- Araijeet Singh Hundal
- Aditya Arjun Lalage

Badminton Asia Team Ch'ship: India women's title defence ends in quarterfinals

QINGDAO

India's women's team saw its title defence at the Badminton Asia Team Championships come to an abrupt end after suffering a 0-3 defeat against a second-string China in the quarterfinals here on Friday.

The Indian side, which had created history by winning its maiden gold medal in the previous edition in 2024, struggled to match China's consistency and depth, with the absence of ace shuttler P.V. Sindhu proving a significant setback. Sindhu was ruled out due to a niggle, leaving a relatively inexperienced squad to shoulder the responsibility in a high-pressure knockout tie.

India's hopes of a positive start were dashed in the opening singles as World No. 42 Tanvi Sharma went down tamely to World No. 10 Gao Fang Jie. Tanvi, who had impressed earlier in the tournament with two wins, was unable to find her rhythm and lost 9-21, 9-21 in a one-sided contest that handed China an early lead.

The women's doubles pair of Gayatri Gopichand and Treesa Jolly fought valiantly in the second match but fell short against the formidable world No. 4 Chinese combination of Jia Yi Fan and Zhang Shu Xian.

The Indian duo showed resilience, clawing back from a 10-16 deficit in the opening game to draw level, only to lose it 22-24. In the second game, Gayatri and Treesa briefly took control at 13-10 before a flurry of points swung the momentum back in China's favour, resulting in an 18-21 loss.

With the tie hanging by a thread, Rakshitha Ramraj put up a spirited display against Xu Wen Jing in the second singles. Rakshitha pushed her opponent hard in a gruelling 69-minute battle but eventually lost 14-21, 21-15, 17-21, sealing India's exit.

Earlier, India had opened its campaign with a dominant 5-0 win over Myanmar before narrowly losing 2-3 to Thailand in its final group-stage match, a result that set up the quarterfinal clash with China.

Three titles in three years is amazing: SMRITI MANDHANA

RCB skipper hails franchise's golden run after WPL triumph over Delhi Capitals

VADODARA

Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Smriti Mandhana described the franchise's run of success as "amazing" after RCB clinched their second Women's Premier League title, completing a rare hat-trick of trophies across competitions in three years. Mandhana's comments came after RCB defeated Delhi Capitals by six wickets in the WPL 2026 final at the Baroda Cricket Association Stadium here on Thursday. Chasing a daunting target of 204, RCB produced a composed batting effort to seal the title, extending Delhi Capitals' heartbreak to a fourth final defeat in as many appearances. "Very pleased. RCB fans are the best in the world. We get support wherever we play. Three titles in three years for the franchise — it is amazing," Mandhana said, reflecting on the women's team's breakthrough WPL triumph in 2024, the men's IPL victory last year, and now another WPL crown. Mandhana felt the pitch was conducive to batting but credited the bowling unit for setting up the win. "We did think it was a good surface to bat on. 203 is a good score in a final. It was a match-winning spell from Lauren Bell — she bowled four overs for just 20 in a match where 400 runs were scored," she said. The skipper also lauded the backroom staff for creating clarity within the squad. "One thing that stood out this season was the support staff. Roles were very clear, which makes our job easier on the field. The girls are working extremely hard, especially in the gym, and that gives you confidence to chase any score," Mandhana added, singling out Georgia Wareham's contribution with the bat as "special". Despite another final loss, Delhi Capitals captain Jemimah Rodrigues said she was proud of her team's resilience. "Could not be more proud of this group. It wasn't easy, but the character the girls showed was outstanding. Putting up 204 in a final is always a great effort. Everyone fought hard and gave their best," Rodrigues said.

'You guys deserve this undoubtedly': Virat Kohli lauds RCB's second title

BENGALURU

Former India captain Virat Kohli heaped praise on Royal Challengers Bengaluru's women's team after they clinched their second Women's Premier League (WPL) title, calling the achievement fully deserved and a moment of pride for the entire franchise. Kohli, the long-standing face of the Bengaluru-based franchise, took to Instagram to congratulate the side led by Smriti Mandhana, shortly after RCB defeated Delhi Capitals by six wickets in the WPL 2026 final. The victory marked RCB women's second championship, following their maiden title win in 2024, and further underlined the franchise's recent golden run. "Champions again. Keeping the RCB flag flying high and something that each one of you can be proud of," Kohli wrote. "To Smriti and the whole squad and the management team, a big congratulations for this tremendous victory. You guys deserve this undoubtedly. Enjoy the moment and embrace the love of our amazing fans."

Kohli's message resonated strongly with RCB supporters, many of whom have endured years of near-misses before the franchise's fortunes turned around in recent seasons. The women's team broke the club's title drought in 2024, before the men's side finally lifted the IPL trophy in 2025. The latest WPL triumph has further cemented RCB's status as one of the most successful franchises across formats. In the final played at the Baroda Cricket Association Stadium in Vadodara, RCB produced a commanding all-round performance. Chasing a stiff target of 204, Mandhana anchored the innings with a composed and authoritative knock, ensuring RCB crossed the line with six wickets in hand.

For Delhi Capitals, the loss was another bitter blow, as they suffered their fourth defeat in a WPL final. Despite the disappointment, the 2026 season was once again marked by competitive cricket and growing fan engagement.

Kohli's public appreciation of the women's team highlighted the increasing prominence of the WPL and the strong sense of unity within the RCB franchise, a bond that now has multiple titles to celebrate.

RCB'S RISE ACROSS FORMATS CONTINUES WITH WPL TRIUMPH

Kohli's words struck a chord with RCB fans who had lived through years of heartbreak before the franchise's revival in recent seasons. The women's team ended the long wait for silverware with their breakthrough title in 2024, followed by the men finally winning the IPL in 2025. Sunday's WPL success has further reinforced RCB's rise as a powerhouse across formats. In the Vadodara final, RCB delivered a dominant all-round show, with Smriti Mandhana calmly steering the chase of 204 to seal a six-wicket win. Delhi Capitals, meanwhile, endured their fourth WPL final defeat, even as the league continued to grow in quality and popularity.

Mandhana hid major illness before WPL final: RCB coach

BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bengaluru captain Smriti Mandhana battled a "massive flu" ahead of the Women's Premier League (WPL) 2026 final but chose to hide her condition from teammates, head coach Mololan Rangarajan revealed after RCB's title-winning victory over Delhi Capitals.

According to Rangarajan, Mandhana was seriously unwell with a high fever in the lead-up to the summit clash but never let it affect her preparation or demeanour. "Massive, massive flu. She was seriously unwell, but she didn't show it for even a second. Nobody in the team knew," Rangarajan said. "When I spoke to her, she just said, 'Nahi, Malo, koi problem nahi. I'll be there.' That's Smriti and her work ethic." Mandhana went on to produce one of the finest innings in WPL history, scoring a scintillating 87 off just 41 balls, laced with 12 fours and three sixes. Her knock powered RCB to a successful chase of 204 — the highest run chase ever achieved in a WPL final — as the Bengaluru side sealed their second league title and denied Delhi Capitals yet again.

Rangarajan struggled to find words to describe the innings. "She saved one of her best knocks for the final. The way she batted was almost inhuman — so classy, so elegant. She looked completely in control, picking exactly where she wanted to attack," he said. The coach also highlighted Mandhana's preparation, noting that she had

trained just two days before the final. "Her last training session was among the best she's ever had. We had many chats about her batting, how she was feeling, and she looked extremely comfortable," he added.

Mandhana finished the tournament as the highest run-scorer, capping off a remarkable phase in her career that also includes topping India's batting charts and playing a key role in the country's 2025 Women's World Cup triumph.

Describing her approach, Rangarajan called Mandhana a "nerd" when it comes to batting. "She's always looking to improve, always trying something new. That hunger to get better is why she's achieved what she has," he said.

Faster courts favour Dhakshineswar as India brace for Netherlands in Davis Cup Qualifier

BENGALURU

The faster playing conditions in Bengaluru are expected to play into the strengths of Dhakshineswar Suresh as India prepare to face the Netherlands in the Davis Cup Qualifier first-round tie, beginning on Saturday. With India's top singles player Sumit Nagal returning from a minor hip injury, the hosts are likely to lean heavily on Dhakshineswar's ability to exploit the quick surface, particularly in the opening singles rubbers. The conditions reward first-strike tennis and aggressive shot-making, an area where Dhakshineswar has consistently shown his ability to thrive under pressure.While Nagal has been recovering well and has looked increasingly comfortable during practice sessions, there remain questions over how his body will respond once the tie moves into high-intensity match play. The physical demands of singles, combined with the speed of the court, could test Nagal's movement and endurance if encounters stretch into long rallies, even though he is familiar with local conditions after competing in the Bengaluru Open and the World Tennis League. Dhakshineswar's role could therefore be pivotal once again, much like in Switzerland last year when he rose to the occasion to win crucial singles matches in India's historic away victory. His opening-rubber win there allowed Nagal the breathing space to settle into the tie and later sweep his singles. The Netherlands, too, are expected to enjoy the faster surface but arrive weakened by the absence of their top two singles players — Tallon Griekspoor and Botic van de Zandschulp. That has evened out the contest and given India confidence of pulling off a second successive Davis Cup upset.

The Dutch challenge will be led by world No. 88 Jesper de Jong, who has recorded notable wins over several top-30 players and looms as the biggest singles threat. India will look to capitalise against Guy den Ouden, ranked 162, who is set to make his Davis Cup debut.

India's doubles prospects have been strengthened by the return of Yuki Bhambri, now ranked 20, who will partner N. Sriram Balaji against Sandre Arends and David Pel.

'Feeling better day by day': Sumit Nagal ahead of Davis Cup

BENGALURU

India's top singles player Sumit Nagal sought to allay concerns over his fitness ahead of the Davis Cup Qualifiers Round 1 tie against the Netherlands, saying he is feeling stronger with each passing day following an intensive rehabilitation programme.

Questions were raised about Nagal's readiness after he picked up a hip injury earlier this season, but the world No. 281 sounded optimistic during a media interaction at the SM Krishna Tennis Stadium, where India will host the two-day tie starting this weekend. "I'm feeling good, feeling better day by day," Nagal said. "I've been working a lot over the last two or three weeks. For me, the camp started right after Bangkok. I didn't feel great there, so I flew back the same night and began my rehab. Honestly, I don't have any complaints. I did whatever I could to be ready for the Davis Cup, because I knew how important this match is." Following an extended pre-season, Nagal opened his 2026 campaign at the ATP Challenger in Bengaluru, exiting in the round of 16, before travelling to Thailand for another Challenger event. It was there, on January 14, that he suffered a hip tear and was forced to retire mid-match against Japan's Rio Noguchi. Admitting that doubts inevitably creep in after an injury, Nagal said the key was to take recovery step by step. "There are always thoughts of 'is it going to be okay or not?' The fear is there when you come back from an injury and before your first match.

Team to travel to Colombo, says Suryakumar Yadav despite Pakistan boycott

MUMBAI

India captain Suryakumar Yadav said his team would travel to Colombo as scheduled for their ICC T20 World Cup fixture, even as uncertainty continues over Pakistan's reported decision to boycott the marquee clash between the two arch-rivals.

The build-up to the T20 World Cup, which begins on Saturday, has been marked by off-field turbulence. Bangladesh earlier refused to travel to India citing security concerns, forcing the ICC to replace them with Scotland. The situation escalated further after the Pakistan government denied permission for its team to face India in Colombo on February 15, a move reiterated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif this week.

While the Pakistan Cricket Board has not formally communicated its boycott to the ICC, the developments have cast a shadow over the high-profile encounter. Suryakumar, however, adopted a measured and diplomatic tone, stressing that India's plans remain unchanged.

"Our mindset is pretty clear. We have not said no. They have. The ICC has given the fixture. The BCCI and the governments decided on a neutral venue if the two teams have to play each other. Our flight is booked to Colombo. We are going there, the rest we will see," Suryakumar said at the Captain's Day press conference at the BCCI headquarters in Wankhede Stadium.

Outlining India's immediate schedule, the skipper said the team would first play the USA on February 7, followed by a match against Namibia in Delhi, before flying to Colombo. Asked about the external noise surrounding the Pakistan fixture, Suryakumar said such matters were beyond the team's control.

"Their decision is not in my control. We have been told that we have to play a game on the 15th. If we get an opportunity again in Colombo, we will definitely play," he said, recalling India's successful outings against Pakistan in recent Asia Cup encounters.

Shifting focus to cricket, Suryakumar emphasised India's commitment to fearless and consistent cricket. "For the last two or three years, our thinking has changed. Whether it's a bilateral series, Asia Cup or an ICC event, we try to play the same brand of cricket. If we play well, the results will follow," he said.

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